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Suicide in Henry James's Fiction.

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SUICIDE IN HENRY JAMES'S FICTION

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SUICIDE IN HENRY JAMES'S FICTION

A Dissertation

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by
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Dedication

To the memory of my parents

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Note on Texts Used

For all works included in James's New York edition, the texts used are those of the 26-volume New York edition. Parenthetical references to these in the body of the dissertation are identified by the volume number in Arabic numerals separated from page numbers in Arabic numerals by a colon. The texts of tales not included in the New York edition are those from The Complete Tales of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel. Parenthetical references to these are identified by the letters "CT" followed by volume and page numbers in Arabic numerals separated by a colon. Watch and Ward is listed separately in the Bibliography.

Abbreviations Used

Documentation in this dissertation follows the MLA Style Manual, 1985. As such, documentation is included in the body of the text. For the sake of convenience, the following abbreviations are used for parenthetical references to often-used sources.

A	Aries, The Hour of Our Death
AA	Alvarez, The Savage God
AUT	James, Autobiography, ed. F. W. Dupee
CT	James, The Complete Tales, ed. Edel
D	Durkheim, Suicide
Life 1	The Life of Henry James, Vol. 1
Life 2	The Life of Henry James, Vol. 2
F	Feinstein, Becoming William James
L 1-L 4	Henry James Letters, ed. Edel.
N	The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. Matthiessen and Murdock.
P	James, "Prefaces to the New York Edition"

Abstract

A writer who emphasizes the workings of the minds of his characters by working "an acre of embroidery on an inch of canvas," James calls attention to the portrayal of self-willed deaths in his fiction. Writing in the period following the glorification of the suicidal deaths of Werther and Chatterton, James creates several suicidal characters. Having grown up in a highly individualistic family that emphasized the exercise of free will, and being one who revels in the probing of his characters' consciousnesses, James considered important the role of will in matters of life and death. The ruinous effects of displacement in his self-destructive characters further accentuate the autobiographical element in his suicide fiction. A journey, either physical or mental, the most inalienable part of the quest and an integral part of James's life, also symbolizes the failed quests of many of his suicides. For purposes of this study, characters who willfully courted death at their own hands through violent means and those who died because of the more passive loss of will to live are equally important. Therefore, the term suicide is used in the sense of Emile Durkheim's late

nineteenth-century definition as applying to "all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result." Thus, Daisy Miller's willful contracting of fatal malaria and the fatally ill Milly Theale's turning her face to the wall are as much suicidal acts as Hyacinth Robinson's putting a bullet through his heart or Agatha Grice's consumption of poison.

Ten instances of physical suicide and eight instances of symbolic suicides in a total of sixteen novels and tales are closely analyzed in this study. Personal experiences, the sense of displacement resulting from trans-Atlantic travels and social mobility, and failed quests characterize James's fictional suicides. Placed against his historical and sociological backgrounds, in the delineation of his suicidal characters James shows himself to be very much a man of his times and of his milieu.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Twentieth-century literature has engaged freely in the making and remaking of myths. T. S. Eliot and James Joyce created their own myths while drawing freely from the wells of their classical knowledge. Working within the restraints of the Christian myth and drawing upon age-old taboos, William Faulkner, a son of the "Bible belt" of the American South, created a private myth based in his fictional Yoknapatawpha County. Eliot, Joyce and Faulkner have been recognized, both academically and popularly, as myth-makers. Henry James, who preceded them both chronologically and aesthetically, has not received as much recognition as a myth-maker; yet, with his emphasis on the workings of the human mind and on consciousness, James gave form to a mythology singularly his. Joyce and Faulkner would later make famous the technique of stream of consciousness initiated by James. Thinly veiled autobiography, the well-known international theme and the quest for the self constitute the chief components of James's private myth. Another commonplace, death--both natural and self-willed--stalks James's fiction. An important but neglected aspect of the Jamesian myth, suicide in his fiction, calls for close

scrutiny. For purposes of this study, characters who willfully courted death at their own hands and those who died by default when they lost their will to live are equally important. Therefore, Emile Durkheim's late-nineteenth-century definition of suicide seems most appropriate: "the term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result" (44).

Death occurs frequently in the Jamesian world. Voluntary death, though a less frequent occurrence than natural death, is common enough to warrant a special study. A close examination of James's fictional suicides impresses one with their conformity to attitudes about self-murder current in James's time, thus demonstrating his understanding of human motivation and action. His analyses of the mental processes of the characters involved and the epiphanic flashes they experience often enable the reader to understand self-destructive tendencies. James's attitude toward suicide, especially in the light of his attitude toward life and living, makes an interesting study. His personal experiences and his family background strongly color his attitude. His own analyses of the evolution of his works detailed in the carefully worked out prefaces further underscore the

importance of autobiography in Henry James's fiction in general and his treatment of suicide in particular. Insofar as several of the suicides take place as a result of the displacement of Americans in European cultures, the international theme is an integral part of the Jamesian suicide myth. The journey motif, that automatically emanates from the international theme and highlights the frustrated quests of several of his suicidal characters, further enhances our understanding of the suicides.

In a total of nine novels and tales, there are ten instances of obvious or suspected suicides where the concerned individuals resort to violent means to end their lives. Two works without the international theme envelope this group of nine. One of James's few "American" tales, "Osborne's Revenge" (1868), leads the list; another one, "A Round of Visits" (1910), concludes it. In "Osborne's Revenge," Robert Graham, a deluded young man of literary bent, "had shot himself through the head in his room at the hotel" (CT 2: 17). Before doing it, however, he had sent to his best friend, Philip Osborne, a letter describing his mental state and his reasons for taking this drastic step. He thus leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that he sought death at his own hands. Three years later, in Watch and Ward, the

first novel James wrote (though the mature James rejected it by claiming The American as his first novel and by excluding the earlier novel from the New York edition), a widower, distraught over his financial situation, kills himself in the presence of his young daughter. When others arrive on the scene, his hand still holds the pistol from which "he had just sent a bullet through his brain" (29). This is the only one of the ten suicides performed in the presence of a witness. An 1874 story, "Madame de Mauves," is singular in having two suicides. The impoverished Baron de Mauves, husband of the innocent and wealthy American Euphemia, blows his brains out (13: 331) because his virtuous wife refuses to forgive his transgressions after he has reformed himself. The other suicide in the story, his sister's husband, having lost his fortune and fearing his wife, had earlier blown his brains out (13: 249).

Roderick Hudson (1874-75) is the first work which raises the question of intention. Though nobody witnesses Roderick's fall to his death from the mountain top, ample textual evidence and foreshadowing justify labeling Roderick a suicide. In his preface to the New York edition, James, talking about the rate of Roderick's disintegration, observes his "large capacity for ruin" (P 1047). When Rowland Mallet offers a new beginning for

Roderick in Europe, the artist begins with a self-destructive act--shattering his sculpture of Mr. Striker's skull with a hammer (1: 38). Though the act might be considered a symbolic one (as Roderick himself suggests when he says, "I've driven the money-changers out of the temple!") which severs his connection with the world represented by Mr. Striker, the destruction of a created piece at the artist's own hand certainly betokens a self-destructive act. He reveals the same tendency later when he disowns the sculpture he made under commission for Mr. Leavenworth and in response to his patron's suggestion about completing the piece to his specification, asserts, "I would much rather smash it" (1: 304). Gloriani's prediction that Roderick, like most artists, would "fizzle out" and would even consider suicide when inspiration leaves him (2: 124) further foreshadows the end. Facing a dry spell before completing Mr. Leavenworth's commission, Roderick, in a long speech to Rowland, echoes Gloriani's earlier prediction and expresses his suicidal tendency:

> "I am prepared, at any rate, for a fizzle. It won't be a tragedy, simply because I shan't assist at it. The end of my work shall be the end of my life. When I've played my last card I shall cease to care for the game. I'm not

> making vulgar threats of the dagger or the bowl; for destiny, I trust, won't make me further ridiculous by forcing me publicly to fumble with them. But I have a conviction that if the hour strikes here," and he tapped his forehead, "I shall disappear, dissolve, be carried off in a something as pretty, let us hope, as the drifted spray of a fountain; that's what I shall have been. For the past ten days I've had the vision of some such fate perpetually swimming before me. My mind is like a dead calm in the tropics, and my imagination as motionless as the blighted ship in the 'Ancient Mariner'!" (1: 231)

Rowland, trying to persuade Roderick to finish Mr. Leavenworth's commission, echoes similar thoughts and addresses his protégé in terms of self-destruction: "You're standing on the edge of a very deep sea. If you suffer this accident to put you out, you take your plunge" (1: 305). Such thoughts take deeper root in Rowland when he muses later that

> if Roderick were really going. . . to fizzle out, one might help him on the way--. . . for forty-eight hours there swam before Rowland's eyes a vision of the wondrous youth, graceful

> and beautiful as he passed, plunging like a diver into a misty gulf. The gulf was destruction, annihilation, death; but if death had been decreed why shouldn't the agony be at least brief? (1: 314)

Despite his vehement protest to Christina that "I shall not kill myself," Roderick's daredevil attempt at plucking the flower off the ledge at the Coliseum also reveals his suicidal inclination. As the novel progresses, the tendency increases. At the Villa Pandolfini, near Florence, his companions realize that the change of air and scene has not restored his spirits. Narrative commentary at this point suggests suicidal and murderous tendencies in Roderick: "an attitude of positive urbanity towards life was not to be expected; it was doing one's duty to hold one's tongue and keep one's hand off one's own windpipe and other people's" (1: 445). Frustrated over his inability to produce, Roderick tells Rowland, "I recommend you to set me up there at the end of the garden and shoot me dead" (1: 458). When his mother protests about his language, Roderick responds in even more violent terms: "This would be a lovely night for it, and I should be a lucky fellow to be buried in this garden. But bury me alive if you prefer. Take me back to Northampton" (1: 458). Later, in Switzerland,

the narrator compares Roderick's despair to his earlier declaration of despair by the Italian lakeside and comments: "He now kept this despair to himself and went decently enough about the ordinary business of life." (1: 471). For all intents and purposes, the carefully foreshadowed suicide makes his death as the result of a fall from a great height inevitable.

More than a decade after Roderick Hudson, in The Princess Casamassima (1885-86), Hyacinth Robinson's dead body is discovered within a room locked from the inside, leaving no question as to how he came to his end: "Mr. Robinson has shot himself through the heart" (6: 431). "The Modern Warning" (1888), containing one of two suicides by poisoning in James's fiction, depicts the only married woman to take her own life. Another tale published the same year, "The Patagonia," contains the other female suicide. Grace Mavis disappears one night from the Patagonia. Though her body is not recovered, she may safely be considered a suicide since no indication is given of a possible accidental fall and since we have no reason to suspect that anyone on board would deliberately push her into the ocean. "Sir Edmund Orme" (1891), the only Jamesian ghost story with a suicide, is the only work with a male suicide who resorts to poisoning. After keeping suicide out of his fiction

for almost two decades, James returns to it in "A Round of Visits" (1910). Newton Winch, depressed over his unethical financial transactions, shoots himself through his temple just as the police arrive at the door for him and his friend Mark Monteith goes to open the door for them.

Certain interesting facts emerge from a surface observation of these suicides. Except for the two tales published in 1888, "The Modern Warning" and "The Patagonia," all of the physical suicides are men. For those who seek violent deaths at their own hands, the most often used means is the gun. Five of these choose to send bullets through their brains, while one sends it through his heart. Two choose to end their lives by poisoning, one falls from a mountaintop, and another drowns herself. The two women choose comparatively less violent forms of self-destruction: Agatha in "The Modern Warning" takes poison, while Grace Mavis aboard "The Patagonia" chooses drowning. All except Robert Graham in "Osborne's Revenge," Lambert in Watch and Ward and M. Clairin in "Madame de Mauves" are protagonists or major characters. The suicides of the Baron in "Madame de Mauves," Roderick Hudson in the novel of that name, Hyacinth Robinson in The Princess Casamassima, Agatha in "The Modern Warning," Grace in "The Patagonia" and Newton

Winch in "A Round of Visits" are all culminating activities in the respective works. Robert Graham's suicide, which takes place early in "Osborne's Revenge," provides the background for Philip Osborne's revenge. Sir Edmund Orme's suicide, which had taken place several years before the current action, accounts for his ghostly presence in the story named after him. The suicide in Watch and Ward is unique in not having much bearing on the main action of the plot. Lambert's suicide remains in the background as the event that orphaned Nora, making Roger Lawrence's entry into her life possible. The mental stability of Robert Graham, Lambert, and Roderick Hudson appears to be questionable. All of the other physical suicides seem to be in command of their mental faculties.

In addition to the ten instances of physical suicide, there are several examples where James's characters lose their will to live and subsequently lose their lives or give up the trappings of living in the physical world. Three tales and four novels containing eight such voluntary deaths, most of them results of a combination of illness and loss of will, offer a compelling study in the psychology of self-destruction.

Two Civil War stories present protagonists who lose their will to live when they face rejection in love. The

self-sacrificing elements of the deaths of the two Civil War heroes help identify their deaths as self-willed. In "The Story of a Year" (1865), a wounded young soldier has made a remarkable recovery. However, when he realizes that his "intended," Lizzie, is romantically interested in someone else, he dies after releasing Lizzie from her commitment to him. Ironically, at the same time, he utters part of the wedding vows, asking Lizzie to be his for a little while, "holding my hands--so--until death parts us" (CT 1: 97). "A Most Extraordinary Case" (1868) has another Civil War hero, Colonel Ferdinand Mason, who recovers from a grievous ailment when love nourishes him, but who suddenly makes himself a martyr at the altar of love when he realizes that the girl he adores will soon marry someone else. The narrator makes it perfectly clear that Mason dies because he loses his will to live. He bequeaths most of his wealth to Horace Knight, Caroline Hofmann's would-be husband: "From this moment his strength began rapidly to ebb, and the shattered fragments of his long-resisting will floated down its shallow current into dissolution" (CT 2: 365). To the young doctor, Horace Knight, Mason's death is quite inexplicable; it was "the most extraordinary case" he had ever heard of.

The American (1876-77), first of the two

full-length novels in this group, contains two instances of voluntary giving up of life. The aristocratic Claire de Cintre, when caught between family loyalty and love of her American suitor, chooses to enter a convent. Insofar as it means being dead to the world, the action may be considered a symbolic suicide. That Claire views her entering a convent as a suicidal act is evidenced in her choice of words to Newman. She calls her going away "death" and adds, "let me bury myself" (2: 365). When pressed about where she is going, she says, "I am going out of the world. . . . I am going into a convent" (2: 418). Her words clearly do not express the enthusiasm of a person who joins a convent prompted by admirable, noble and selfless motives. The idea of her being dead to the world is underscored by Newman's own experience of Claire's self-denial. He tells Mrs. Tristram: "I feel like a widower . . . as if my wife had been murdered and her assassins were still at large" (2: 512). He further views her as entombing herself in a cell (2: 419) and he refers to the convent as "the stony sepulchre that held her" (2: 531). Earlier, her brother, Valentin de Bellegarde, had courted physical death in a duel over an obviously disreputable young woman.

Daisy Miller and Milly Theale stand at two ends of the spectrum of characters who die when they lose their

will to live. Daisy shows that even young Americans of sturdy stock, quite healthy and planning to remain so, can suddenly lose their will to live and die, while Milly Theale demonstrates how a strong will to live can sustain even a fatally ill person and how that person can die as soon as she loses her will to live. Twice Daisy declares her intention to remain healthy. First, when her mother and Mrs. Walker try to dissuade her from going to the Pincio with Giovanelli because she might catch the fever, she asserts: "I don't want to do anything that's going to affect my health--or my character either!" (18: 54). Later, at the Colosseum, when Winterbourne criticizes Daisy's Italian escort for his indiscretion in taking her there, Daisy, still very much sure of herself, responds, "I never was sick, and I don't mean to be! . . . I don't look like much, but I'm healthy! I was bound to see the Colosseum by moonlight" (18: 88), thus arrogantly expressing her will to live. However, repeated acts of rejection by her compatriots in Rome gradually kill her zest for life. The innocent Daisy, who, early in the tale, equates the other Americans in Rome not speaking to her and her mother with their (her family's) not speaking to the others and thus being "exclusive" (18: 28), gives up when she suspects that Winterbourne does not believe in her innocence. When

Winterbourne keeps making up excuses for not introducing Daisy to Mrs. Costello, Daisy recognizes, "She does n't want to know me!" Even though she pretends not to be bothered by it and "quite crowed for the fun of it," Winterbourne "distinguished . . . a wee false note in this" (18: 29). Despite all her innocence and bravado, the insult in Mrs. Walker's deliberately turning her back to Daisy who was trying to take leave of the hostess before leaving her party, is not lost upon Daisy. She "turned very pale and looked at her mother" (18: 73) and soon turns away, "looking with a small white prettiness, a blighted grace, at the circle near the door" (18: 73). Such a reaction belies Winterbourne's suspicion that she simply does not feel and does not know about all the cold shoulders that were turned upon her (18: 80). When a somewhat jealous Winterbourne lets Daisy know that everyone thinks she goes around too much with Giovanelli, adding "if you care to know," she retorts vehemently, "Of course I care to know! . . . They don't really care a straw what I do" (18: 83), again demonstrating that she likes to be thought well of; she goes so far as to chide Winterbourne with "I should n't think you'd let people be so unkind!" (as Mrs. Walker at her party) (18: 83). The scene at the Colosseum demonstrates the ultimate dispiriting of Daisy. When she realizes that

Winterbourne has been observing her and Giovanelli and has turned away without speaking to her, she tells her escort, "Why it was Mr. Winterbourne!. . . He saw me and he cuts me dead!" (18: 86). An irate Winterbourne, having heard this, confronts her and Giovanelli about the stupidity of their being in "a nest of malaria." Giovanelli quickly exculpates himself and assures Daisy's concerned friend, "I assured Mademoiselle it was a grave indiscretion but when was Mademoiselle ever prudent?" (18: 87), underscoring the defiant nature of Daisy's actions. Still anxious for Winterbourne's approval, Daisy asks him if he believed that she was engaged. Winterbourne's response, apparently expressing indifference in the matter, is the final stroke, making her declare, "I don't care whether I have Roman fever or not" (18: 89).

The willful nature of Daisy Miller's death makes it conform to Durkheim's definition of suicide. Her actions as well as the observations of those who know her well testify to the active role of her will in her contracting malaria and her subsequent passivity and loss of will to live. When she is taken seriously ill, even her brother Randolph affirms, "It's going round at night that way, you bet--that's what has made her so sick" (18: 90). From her sick bed, Daisy insists that her mother should

tell Mr. Winterbourne that she never was engaged to Giovanelli, thus exhibiting her desire for approval. It is only after her death that Winterbourne realizes that "she would have appreciated one's esteem" (18: 93). After Daisy's funeral, when an indignant Winterbourne confronts Giovanelli with his responsibility in taking her to the Colosseum, he again expresses the willful nature of her act by saying, "She did what she liked!" (18: 92)--she caught malaria! Her death, thus, results from a positive and a negative act which she knows will result in death.

If an otherwise robust Daisy Miller, in the face of unfair criticism, loses her vibrant interest in life to the point of losing her will to live, a fatally ill Milly Theale, in The Wings of the Dove (1902), hangs on to life by the sheer power of her will until betrayal in love provokes her to release her precarious hold on it. Cargill, Bowden and Fowler, among others, observe the element of will in Milly Theale's life and death. According to Cargill, "the whole story of Milly Theale is the story of her will to live, strengthened by love, but finally destroyed by the revelation of the plot against her" (Novels 339). According to Bowden, "it is her will to live, her firm determination to enjoy as much of life as possible, that makes her courage attractive and her death tragic" (93). Virginia Fowler sees Milly as

continuing to exert an influence on the world through her bequest to Merton Densher. Fowler adds: "but she can do so only by dying. And death is, though perhaps unconsciously, to some extent self-willed" (88-89). James repeatedly uses a phrase to symbolize Milly's loss of will. Mrs. Stringham reports to Densher, on Milly's death: "She has turned her face to the wall" (20: 270). Densher repeats the phrase when he in turn reports it to Kate, emphasizing the heavy blow that Mark has given: "The way it affected her was that it made her give up. She has given up beyond all power to care again; and that's why she is dying. . . . 'she turned her face to the wall'" (20: 320-21).

A story published the same year as "Daisy Miller," "Longstaff's Marriage" delineates opposing ways in which a man and a woman react to possible marriage and/or rejection. Acceptance of her love prompts Diana Belfield to will herself to die as an act of altruism. The Pupil (1891) contains the touching story of an ailing young man who loses his will to live when he experiences what he considers the ultimate rejection by his family and, perhaps, by his tutor as well. Unlike Daisy Miller and Milly Theale in his poverty, Morgan Moreen resembles Daisy in his tender age and Milly in his serious illness. Though he dies of a heart attack, it is clear that James

intended the element of will to color his death as strongly as it colors the deaths of Daisy and Milly. In his preface to the New York edition, James compares Morgan Moreen to Hyacinth Robinson of The Princess Casamassima and says, "it is much in this manner [the manner of Hyacinth Robinson] . . . that Morgan Moreen breaks down--his burden indeed not so heavy, but his strength so much less formed" (1170). In pointing up the similarity between Morgan Moreen's death and the death of Hyacinth Robinson, a clear suicide, James attributes a self-willed element to young Moreen's death.

In contrast to the physical suicides, women dominate the group of characters who will their own deaths. In this cluster of tales and novels, a combination of illness and loss of will results in the deaths of the protagonists. Claire de Cintre and her brother Valentin in The American are exceptional in being in perfect health when they will their deaths, whether physical or symbolic.

Suicide, with its varying causal and temporal aspects, colors the real as well as the imaginative world of creative people. The number of suicides among notable literary figures--Chatterton, Hemingway and Sylvia Plath, among others--points to its influence in the real world. The frequency of suicide among major fictional characters

of the nineteenth century--Hardy's Eustacia and Little Father Tim, Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and Flaubert's Madame Bovary to name a few--impresses one with its pervasiveness in the imaginative world of notable authors. A historical survey of attitudes toward suicide over the centuries would help place such fictional suicides in perspective. Penetrating studies of suicide and death by such notable figures as Emile Durkheim, Louis Dublin, Edwin Shneidman, A. Alvarez and Philippe Aries illuminate the way to understanding self-destruction. In the light of these studies, a detailed analysis of the suicides in James's fiction in their relation to their respective worlds would enlighten us on the sociology, the psychology and often the irrationality of this phenomenon.

In the structure of the Jamesian myth, autobiography may be considered the mortar that holds the various bricks together. The number of suicides among people closely known to Henry James obviously influences his fictional portrayal of self-destruction. The importance of autobiography to Jamesian aesthetics in general, and to his suicide myth in particular, is suggested by the simple fact that the other major elements of the suicide myth--the international theme and the quest--form integral parts of the life that Henry James lived. The

extreme subjectivity of his creative method, with its emphasis on consciousness, drawing heavily and equally upon experiences he had encountered and had missed, underscores autobiography in its most refined form. He openly acknowledges the overriding importance of consciousness, feeling and personal experience when he declares in his autobiography, "to feel a unity, a character and a tone in one's impressions, to feel them related and all harmoniously coloured, that was positively to face the aesthetic, the creative, even, quite wondrously, the critical life and almost on the spot to commence author" (AUT 253). Autobiographical experiences especially color his treatment of the characters who lose their will to live. An experience he sorely missed, active participation in the Civil War, becomes the source of inspiration for his Civil War stories. Modeling his admirable female characters on his favorite cousin Minny Temple further illustrates the autobiographical aspect of the Jamesian myth. Very likely, Henry James encountered his model for Morgan Moreen of "The Pupil" in Louis Osborne, "an American child of the most charming and appealing intelligence, marked by some malady" (AUT 250). Furthermore, the will to live among the hypochondriacal Jameses could very well be reflected in the exhortation to live all one can that

he repeats in several of his works.

A second major aspect of the suicide myth, the well-known international theme, though an integral part of the autobiography, warrants independent consideration. James's extreme fascination with Europe and his repeatedly acknowledged interest in developing "international situations" make this his major theme. As such, it naturally infuses his treatment of suicides. His biography reveals that the interest in Europe was carefully cultivated at home from a very young age. This interest, however, is not strictly Jamesian. Europe has enticed many other American literary notables, including Hawthorne, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. The conflict that ensues is not simply a conflict of cultures. As Leslie Fiedler explains, "this Europe and this America are, however, no more facts of geography than Cooper's Indians and Whites are facts of ethnography; the place-names stand for corruption and innocence, sophistication and naiveté, aesthetics and morality" (191). To James, America's lack of a long history and consequent lack of culture made it somewhat provincial, and even something of an embarrassment. According to the editors of The Notebooks of Henry James, a notebook entry of February 21, 1879, that he later incorporated into his biography of Hawthorne, throws more light on Henry James than on

Hawthorne:

> In a story, some one says--"Oh yes, the United States--a country without a sovereign, without a court, without a nobility, without an army, without a church or a clergy, without a diplomatic service, without a picturesque peasantry, without palaces or castles, or country seats, or ruins, without literature, without novels, without an Oxford or a Cambridge, without cathedrals or ivied churches, without latticed cottages or village ale-houses, without political society, without sport, without fox-hunting, or country gentlemen, without an Epsom or an Ascot, an Eton or a Rugby ---!!" (14)

All of the works containing self-willed death, with the exception of the two Civil War stories, contain international situations. With the exception of the two American tales and "Sir Edmund Orme," all of the works containing physical suicide also have international situations. It stands to reason that the inherent suicidal tendencies of people would be aggravated by the added tensions of the confrontation between two cultures.

The wanderlust that propels the members of the James family and Henry James's characters across the Atlantic

points to perhaps the oldest and commonest aspect of myths in general, the Quest--the often obstacle-filled journey toward an elusive goal that when successful gives the seeker a new beginning and when unsuccessful often results in death. Even in cases where they are not involved in actual travel, James's suicides are seeking fulfillment of one kind or another. In general, failed quest may be safely labelled the most immediate cause of the various suicides. What all these people seek turns out to be self-knowledge. The epiphanic nature of the knowledge of the self when it arrives makes life unbearable for some of James's protagonists, thus inducing them to destroy themselves. Robert Graham in "Osborne's Revenge" seeks love and does not find it; Lambert of Watch and Ward, in his own way, seeks financial security, which he fails to find. In "Madame de Mauves," Euphemia, in search of romance, marries the titled Frenchman, who in his turn seeks financial betterment. After living the life of a rake, he seeks forgiveness from Euphemia; her rejection leads to his suicide. The Baron's brother-in-law fails in his search for the trappings of high living. In the case of Roderick Hudson, his search for his artistic self conflicts with his obsessive search for reciprocity in love. Hyacinth Robinson, engaged in a somewhat more

complicated quest for love, also fails. Agatha, in "A Modern Warning," fails to reconcile her conflicting loyalties between the two families and the two countries to which she belongs. Grace Mavis, in "The Patagonia," who seeks to consummate her love by undertaking the voyage on board The Patagonia, encounters complications on board that impel her to jump into the ocean. Very clearly, rejection in love causes Sir Edmund Orme's suicide. Once he discovers himself, Newton Winch of "A Round of Visits" cannot live with himself.

The quest is naturally more complicated when the will to live is involved. The richer the mental life of the characters, the more complicated their quests. Failure in their search for love causes Lieutenant John Ford, Robert Mason and Claire de Cintré to lose their wills to live. Paradoxically, finding love causes Diana Belfield in "Longstaff's Marriage" to give up on life. Failure to receive the sympathetic understanding that she expected from her compatriots prompts Daisy Miller to lose interest in life. The delicate young Morgan Moreen seeks love, security and understanding from his tutor. The discovery that his tutor does not reciprocate his feelings with the same degree of intensity causes Morgan to succumb to his illness. Betrayal in love causes Milly Theale to lose her strong will to live in spite of

negative odds.

Like George Stransom, Henry James creates his own altar of the dead. The sustaining power of religion, equally absent from James's own life and the lives of his protagonists, appears to be absent from the lives of his suicides also. Even the altar of the dead that Stransom sets up seems to be an individual's attempt at creating a semblance of religion rather than an act of faith. James's suicides may be viewed variously as scapegoats and martyrs and sacrificial lambs. All in all, a study of the suicides in the fictional Jamesian world becomes cohesive through the author's private mythology.

In the next chapter of this dissertation, after listing some of the various definitions of suicide provided by sociologists, psychologists and philosophers, I shall proceed to present sociological and psychological, and to a limited extent, philosophical, views of self-destruction that lead to attitudes current in James's time. Analyses of suicides in his fiction will illustrate that as a novelist of manners, in his delineation of suicide, Henry James conforms to then-popular attitudes. His fictional suicides appear to be prompted by commonly accepted causes to commit self-murder. In the third chapter, I shall discuss the most important aspect of the Jamesian myth, his

autobiographical writings and experiences that color his treatment of suicides. After examining the suicides among James's friends, I shall analyze the most important aspect of autobiography relevant to suicide--the will to live and the will to die, as exhibited by members of the James family and their acquaintances. In the fourth chapter, I shall examine the displacement experienced by Jamesian characters, particularly in their journeys abroad, and explore its relation to the Jamesian suicide myth. The final chapter will be devoted to an analysis of an important element of many myths--the Quest--in James's treatment of suicide. Such an analysis will show that the individual quests, leading ultimately to self-knowledge, result in the suicides of some of James's protagonists. The various strands of the Jamesian myth come together here to show that as a myth-maker Henry James belongs to the ranks of the well-acknowledged myth-makers like Eliot, Joyce and Faulkner. Since he precedes them chronologically, James is indeed the leader, or perhaps the master.

Chapter 2

Suicide: General

Sociologists, psychologists and philosophers have commented upon suicide and formulated theories about it. Since I view James primarily as a novelist of manners, my greatest emphasis in this study of suicides in Henry James's fiction will be on the sociological aspects of self-destruction. Since philosophical issues invariably color sociological attitudes, I shall give some passing attention to the philosophy of suicide. According to the French novelist-philosopher Albert Camus, "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy" (3). Since psychological problems play an important part in the taking of one's own life, since the promptings for suicide emanate ultimately from the individual mind, and since Henry James emphasizes the workings of the human mind, I shall pay more attention to the psychology of self-destruction than to its philosophy. The psychological pose in much modern literature, with its emphasis on the will, leads us to the important group of suicides in this study comprised

of Jamesian characters who lose their lives when they lose their wills to live. Since suicide is one type of death, an understanding of death in general will enhance the understanding of suicide. A study of the evolution of the late nineteenth-century attitude toward death automatically includes the attitude toward suicide. As a prime initiator of literary modernism and as a writer who published some of his major fiction in the twentieth century, Henry James invites some attention to twentieth-century attitudes toward the phenomenon also.

The paradox inherent in Camus' parenthetical statement, "what is called a reason for living is also an excellent reason for dying" (4), may best explain the general ambivalence felt toward suicide. According to Bakunin, "the passion for destruction is also a creative passion" (AA xiv). Lionel Trilling calls this Bakunin's defense of anarchism. In The Princess Casamassima, "a brilliantly precise representation of social actuality" (Trilling 74), Hyacinth Robinson, in experiencing the conflicting pulls of a desire for justice and the fear of the destruction of European civilization, is dealing with anarchical belief (Trilling 70). Inability to reconcile the tension between these two is a major reason that prompts him to blow his brains out. Camus, despite his stand against suicide, is perhaps pointing to its

constructive aspect when he says that such an act is committed within the silence of the heart, like a great work of art (4). M. D. Faber, echoing Camus, sees suicidal behavior as a method of coping with reality or what the victim takes reality to be: "thus it can be, and paradoxically most often is, life-oriented, as well as death-oriented, the outcome of an emotional-intellectual impasse at which energy is simultaneously invested, once again paradoxically, in both this world and in its absence" (31). Henry James's brother William, Immanuel Kant and Camus, among others, condemn suicide, whereas David Hume defends the individual's right to commit suicide, and Arthur Schopenhauer, who died when Henry James was seventeen, sees suicide as being in harmony with the denial of the will to live. A contemporary American greatly involved in the study and prevention of suicides, Edwin Shneidman, also points out that suicidal behavior involves a gamble with death and is acutely ambivalent ("Suicide" 39).[1]

The various definitions of suicide offered by philosophers, psychologists and sociologists underscore the multiplicity of attitudes toward killing oneself.[2] A. Alvarez, Avery D. Weisman and Charles W. Wahl emphasize the attention-getting, immortality-guaranteeing and guilt-provoking aspects of suicide. According to

Alvarez, "suicide is simply the most extreme and brutal way of making sure that you will not readily be forgotten. It is a question of a kind of posthumous rebirth in the memory of others" (108). According to Avery D. Weisman, "wanting to die, crying for help, or seeking oblivion are only a few of the many motives for suicide. Just as a religious person ponders the promise of immortality, so is a suicidal person lured by the prospect of a special kind of death which only an act of self-destruction will achieve" (265). Weisman sees suicide also as "only an extreme form of self-destructive behavior in which the wish to obliterate oneself happens to coincide with the wish to discover oneself through death. Suicide is a product of a mood, a time, and a season, but self-destructive acts assume many guises and may often endure throughout an entire lifetime" (Shneidman 265). The tendency for self-destruction manifested in Roderick Hudson all through his life that I pointed out in the introductory chapter illustrates this. Wahl also emphasizes this aspect of suicide when he refers to the "magical" aspects of suicide and says that suicide "is not preeminently a rational act pursued to achieve rational ends, even when it is effected by persons who appear to be eminently rational. Rather, it is a magical act, actuated to achieve irrational,

delusional, illusory ends" (Clues 23). The completely unexpected suicides of Grace Mavis in "The Patagonia" and of Agatha Grice in "The Modern Warning," two outwardly rational women, may be explained in these terms. It is also possible, as Wahl explains to those to whom suicide appears to be against man's normal self-preservative instinct, that death by one's own hand expiates self-guilt and inflicts it on others. Voluntary death, he goes on to say, may be regarded "not only as a surcease from pain in this world . . . but also as an act whereby one acquires powers, qualities and advantages not possessed in the living state" (27). Since such attention-getting suicides are also guilt-provoking, and since such a heavy burden of guilt would be destructive, an element of murder characterizes the effects of such suicides on survivors. The suicide may unconsciously believe, "like Sampson in the temple, that by an act of self-destruction he is encompassing the destruction of myriads of others. The suicide, when he dies, kills not one person, but many. He commits not only suicide but vicarious matricide, patricide, sororicide, fratricide, and even genocide" (30).

Love-related suicides best illustrate this murderous aspect of self-destruction. In "Osborne's Revenge," Robert Graham, though he fails to make the desired

impression on his lady-love, clearly intends for her to feel responsible for his death. The desperate Baron de Mauves, through his suicide, must have sought his cruel wife's sympathy and immortality in her thoughts. Daisy Miller, in rather willfully contracting Roman fever and then losing her will to live, points her accusing finger at her harsh critics. Milly Theale, despite her noble and unselfish intentions, makes Merton Densher feel guilty enough to make him modify his marriage proposal to Kate Croy, in effect cancelling his engagement to her. In the sheer number of survivors who would feel guilty over a suicide, Roderick Hudson remains unsurpassed in James's fiction. His mother, his patron/brother, his faithful fiancée and perhaps even his femme fatale must have felt the destructive impact of his suicide. Thus, as Weisman points out, "suicide offers both masochistic gratification and atonement for homicidal wishes. Although suicide may relieve guilt and hatred, the victim is also free to destroy others by his act" (266).

To Camus, "killing yourself amounts to confessing. It is confessing that life is too much for you or that you do not understand it" (5). Alvarez also points to the confessional aspect of suicide when he says, "Like divorce, suicide is a confession of failure. And like divorce, it is shrouded in excuses and rationalizations

spun endlessly to disguise the simple fact that all one's energy, passion, appetite and ambition have been aborted" (100). As such, suicide may be considered the ultimate purgation. All of the physical suicides in Henry James' works proclaim failure of one kind or another, while all the symbolic suicides in his fiction proclaim failure in love. Robert Graham, in attributing his suicide to unrequited love, proclaims his failure in that department. Lambert's suicide in Watch and Ward proclaims his financial failure. The Baron de Mauves kills himself because he fails to regain his wife's love and respect. His brother-in-law's suicide, which preceded the Baron's own, testifies to his financial failure. Roderick Hudson and Hyacinth Robinson both experience failure in love, with Roderick's failure extending into his artistic career. Agatha, in "The Modern Warning," fails to reconcile her love for her brother and country with her love for her husband and his country. Grace Mavis aboard The Patagonia jumps overboard when she fails to maintain her reputation. Failure of self-esteem provokes Newton Winch's suicide in "A Round of Visits."

There are other highly varied, equally valid views of suicide, some emphasizing the positive aspects of suicide and others the negative. Daniel Stern, among

those who see some positive aspects to self-destruction, views suicides as "the aristocrats of death--God's graduate students, acting out their theses to prove how limited were the alternatives He had allowed Himself and His creatures. Their act was, at its best, superb literary criticism" (AA 140). Robert E. Litman, synthesizing Freud's comments on suicide, says, "To Freud suicide represented a symptom of what we suffer from, a product of man and his civilization, a consequence of mental trends which can be found to some degree in every human being" (Shneidman 337). Andrew F. Henry and James F. Short, after analyzing the sociology of suicide, conclude that "the sociologic evidence suggests that suicide is a form of aggression against the self aroused by some frustration, the cause of which is perceived by the person as lying within the self" (68). George Simpson, the American translator/editor of Durkheim's book, sees suicide as "an ego manifestation even though it is an annihilation of the ego. It is a pain inflicted on the ego, which, in being a compensation for guilt or a relief from anxiety, may be the only form of release, the utmost in going 'beyond the pleasure principle'" (24). While this assortment of definitions clearly enhances our understanding of the act, for reasons already mentioned in the introductory chapter, Emile Durkheim's definition,

given in its entirety on page 2 of the introductory chapter, including "all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself," is most apt for this study.

A historical survey of the phenomenon of suicide shows its prevalence and glory in the early nineteenth-century and among the Romantics. Since Henry James was greatly influenced by the Romantics, the Romantic attitude toward suicide calls for closer analysis. Alvarez best expresses the early nineteenth-century attitude toward suicide by saying, "the traditional combination of genius and melancholy, which had so preoccupied the Renaissance, was transformed by the Romantics into the Siamese twins of genius and premature death" (AA 203).

Chatterton, one of Shelley's "inheritors of unfulfilled renown" ("Adonais"), became the supreme symbol of suicide for the Romantic poets. To them Chatterton was the first example of death by alienation. As Alvarez points out, the untimeliness, waste, pathos, the lack of recognition, the rejection and prematurity associated with his death made Chatterton their ideal (203). Alvarez underscores the desirability of suffering and death, particularly of death by suicide, by pointing out that Chatterton's considerable reputation depended

not on his writing, but on his death (209). During the Romantic period, when the life of the poet was inseparably tied to his work, the intensity of that life became all-important. Intensity was believed not possible after the poet's middle age: "Youth and poetry and death became synonymous: Keats died in 1821 at the age of twenty-five, Shelley the next year at twenty-nine, and when Byron died two years later at thirty-six, his brain and heart, according to the postmortem, already showed symptoms of old age" (203). In this connection, Alvarez calls the last thirty-odd years of the life of Coleridge, who lived into his sixties, poetically speaking "a posthumous existence" (206).

Shelley's "Adonais," a typical pastoral elegy, in its attitude toward death reflects the romantic emphasis on intensity of life: "the intense atom glows/ A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose" (lines 179-80). Balzac reiterates the sentiment when he says, "To kill the emotions and so live on to old age, or to accept the martyrdom of our passions, and die young, is our fate" (AA 204). To the Romantic period, the savage treatment Keats received at the hands of the reviewers and his early death are as important as Chatterton's suicide. Shelley goes so far as to attribute Keats's early death to the anonymous, vituperative review of "Endymion."

Keats was "pierced by the shaft which flies/In darkness" (11-12). Thus an element of will colors Shelley's assessment of Keats's death. Shelley romanticizes Keats's death by giving it a certain suicidal aspect. As in the case of James's Daisy Miller and Grace Mavis, the harshness of critics prompts Keats to lose his will to live. Shelley gave emphatic expression to the desirability of death in stanza 39 of "Adonais":

> Peace, Peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep--
> He hath awakened from the dream of life--
> 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
> With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
> And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
> Invulnerable nothing.--We decay
> Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
> Convulse us and consume us day by day,
> And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.
> (343-51)

To the Romantic, life itself is the real corruption, and only "the white radiance of eternity" is pure enough for his fine sensibilities (AA 203). In stanza 40 of his elegy, Shelley offers consolation at the death of Keats thus:

> From the contagion of the world's slow stain
> He is secure, and now can never mourn

A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn."
(356-60).

To the Romantics, the desirability of death, particularly by suicide, had been heightened by Goethe's novel, The Sorrows of Young Werther, which followed quickly (within four years) upon the heels of the death of Chatterton. Two suicides--Chatterton and Werther--became archetypes of genius as well as role models. Goethe's Werther, "that martyr of unrequited love and excessive sensibility created a new international style of suffering" (207) and made suicide even fashionable.

To sum up, the Romantic stance favored suicide. Byron's remark that "no man ever took a razor into his hand who did not at the same time think how easily he might sever the silver cord of life" (AA 209) illustrates this. Goethe and Flaubert, in acknowledging having entertained suicidal thoughts, further exemplify the appeal of suicide to their generations (209, 211).

The general tolerance and acceptance of suicide as a fact of life that came with the Romantics lead to its entry into art. "And because it threw a sharp, narrow, intensely dramatic light on life at its extreme moments, suicide became the preoccupation of a certain kind of

post-Romantic writer, like Dostoevsky" (215). Also with the Romantic revolution came a shift in the artist's responsibility. From then on, his ultimate responsibility would be not to his society, but to his own consciousness. Consequently, with the collapse of the traditional value system, "the new, permanent condition of the arts was depression" (AA 216). Thus, Kierkegaard in his Journals:

> The whole age can be divided into those who write and those who do not write. Those who write represent despair, and those who read disapprove of it and believe that they have a superior wisdom--and yet, if they were able to write, they would write the same thing. Basically they are all equally despairing, but when one does not have the opportunity to become important with his despair, then it is hardly worth the trouble to despair and show it. Is this what it is to have conquered despair? (216, FN 2)

As Alvarez elaborates, "Despair was for Kierkegaard what grace was for the Puritans: a sign, if not of election, at least of spiritual potentiality" (216). For Dostoevsky and other artists like him, "If the new concern of art was the self, then the ultimate concern of

art was, inevitably, the end of self--that is, death" (217). In contrast to the Middle Ages, when death was simply the doorway to the hereafter, beginning with the nineteenth century the preoccupation with death does not include a concern for the hereafter. Thus, how you die, far from deciding how you will spend eternity, bears testimony to the way you have lived (217).

Dostoevsky's Kirillov, in The Possessed, before shooting himself says: "All man did was to invent God, so as to live without killing himself....I am the only man in universal history who for the first time refused to invent God" (217). To the modern man, killing himself becomes the supreme assertion of his self-will and of his assumption of God's function. Thus, James's characters, both those who will their deaths through violent means and those who will it through the more passive losing of the will to live, equally demonstrate the supreme assertion of their wills. Wittgenstein later pointed out that suicide was the pivot on which every ethical system turns:

> If suicide is allowed then everything is allowed.
>
> If anything is not allowed then suicide is not allowed.
>
> This throws a light on the nature of ethics,

> for suicide is, so to speak, the elementary sin.
>
> And when one investigates it, it is like investigating mercury vapour in order to comprehend the nature of vapours.
>
> Or is even suicide in itself neither good nor evil? (AA 220-221: FN 4)

Kirillov had already acted this out. Dostoevsky writes in his Diary: "Suicide--when the idea of immortality has been lost--becomes an utter and inevitable necessity for any man who, by his mental development, has even slightly lifted himself above the level of cattle" (AA 221).

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, "the old philosophy of individualism which had given to suicide the character of liberty and spontaneity" had changed; "now it became necessary to study it no longer as the expression of individual and independent faculties, but certainly as a social phenomenon allied with all the other racial forces" (Henry Morselli qtd. in AA 74). Alvarez takes exception to the modern scientific tolerance of suicide by pointing out that it is based on human indifference. "The act is removed from the realm of damnation only at the price of being transformed into an interesting but purely intellectual problem, beyond obloquy but also beyond tragedy and morality" (74).

Reiterating his objection to the modern tolerance of suicides, Alvarez concludes his chapter on the background of suicide: "Modern suicide has been removed from the vulnerable, volatile world of human beings and hidden safely away in the isolation wards of science" (75). In modern times, what was once a mortal sin has become a private vice (79). Durkheim's book (1897) heralds the change. With Durkheim the emphasis shifts from the morality of the act to the social conditions which produce such despair (80). A Romanticist and a Modernist, Henry James, in his delineation of suicides in his fiction, appears to be equally in conjunction with this notion.

James's fiction reflects one of the most remarkable features of the arts in this century, the sudden sharp rise in the suicide rate among artists. Twentieth-century suicides include such notable literary figures as Virginia Woolf and Ernest Hemingway, who committed unquestionable suicides, and others like Hart Crane and Dylan Thomas who courted suicide indirectly through alcoholism (AA 237). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the decay of religious authority has contributed greatly to a pervasive sense of alienation among individuals and a consequent death wish. "Without God, death becomes simply the end: brief,

flat, final. . . . Camus saw this absurdity, this blank sense of there being nothing more to life than life itself, as the foundation on which all modern art rests" (AA 225). A sense of religious authority, equally lacking in Henry James's personal life and in the lives of his characters, places the self-willed deaths of James's characters in tune with the spirit of the times.

There is universal agreement among scholars that external misery has relatively little to do with suicide. Far from causing suicides, "given a certain temperament, adversity sharpens the spirit and reinforces the urge to survive, as though out of a kind of bloody-mindedness" (AA 101). Alvarez points to the low number of suicides in concentration camps as most convincing proof of this (101). According to William James,

> It is, indeed, a remarkable fact that sufferings and hardships do not, as a rule, abate the love of life; they seem, on the contrary, usually to give it a keener zest. The sovereign source of melancholy is repletion. Need and struggle are what excite and inspire us; our hour of triumph is what brings the void. Not the Jews of the captivity, but those of the days of Solomon's glory are those from whom the pessimistic

> utterances in our Bible come. Germany, when she lay trampled beneath the hoofs of Bonaparte's troopers, produced perhaps the most optimistic and idealistic literature that the world has seen; . . . The history of our own race is one long commentary on the cheerfulness that comes with fighting ills. ("Life" 16-17)

A study done by Andrew F. Henry and James F. Short shows that in America suicide is "more common among the privileged groups than among the downtrodden." For example, commissioned officers in the U. S. Army kill themselves with greater frequency than enlisted men of the same race do. Also, more whites than blacks, and more men than women, commit suicide. ("The Sociology of Suicide." Clues 60). Durkheim also underscores the inverse relationship between external misery and suicide rate when he says: "Those who suffer most are not those who kill themselves most. Rather it is too great comfort which turns a man against himself. Life is most readily renounced at the time and among the classes where it is least harsh" (298). According to Montesquieu, suicide is often committed "most unaccountably, . . . in the very bosom of happiness and for reasons which seem trivial or even imperceptible" (AA 101). Hyacinth Robinson is the only one of Henry James's suicides from lowlife and

therefore the only one to have experienced external misery. Yet even in his case poverty does not cause his suicide. Henry James, who habitually illuminates the internal worlds of his characters, is strikingly reticent on the workings of the minds of his suicides. In dealing with self-destruction, there is nothing comparable to Isabel Archer's fireside vigil in James's fictional world. The only exception to this may be seen in "The Jolly Corner," in which Spencer Brydon contemplates suicide though he does not commit it. I shall elaborate on Brydon's thoughts on the subject in the chapter on autobiography, in conjunction with James's dream of the Louvre. Joseph Warren Beach's comment on the Jamesian point of view in general might account for such lack of illumination of the suicide's mental processes. According to Beach,

> James's limitation of the point of view, in a given scene, to that of a certain character, does not necessarily mean that we see everything in the heart and mind of that character. It is a means of focussing on whatever it is in the particular situation that the author wishes to show us, for a particular purpose, through the 'camera eye' (to use Dos Passos' phrase) of the chosen character. James

> has infinite powers of reserving and keeping back what at the moment he does not care to reveal--leaving it for us to work out the interpretation as we go along, or leaving it to some other character to make the interpretation at the point where it will be most effective, after all the returns are in. (lxx)

Among causes generally accepted as provoking suicide, clearly the most important one is a lack of integration, which will be discussed later in this chapter under the sociological aspects of suicide. Depression, perhaps, stands in second place. Alvarez describes a suicidal depression as "a kind of spiritual winter, frozen, sterile, unmoving. The richer, softer and more delectable nature becomes, the deeper that internal winter seems, and the wider and more intolerable the abyss which separates the inner world from the outer. Thus suicide becomes a natural reaction to an unnatural condition." Christmas therefore becomes hard to bear for the depressed (84). Total loneliness is the precondition of all suicidal depression (AA 111).

A shift of focus in one's life, a sudden loss or separation, or a single irreversible act, often prompts people to commit suicide. This is commonly referred to as "suicide when the balance of mind was disturbed"

(130). Most of the love-related suicides in Henry James's works take place in this manner. In "Osborne's Revenge," Robert Graham, deluded as he is, is prompted to suicide as a result of supposed rejection of love. The Baron de Mauves kills himself when his virtuous wife refuses to forgive him after his reformation. Grace Mavis jumps overboard because the rumor mill on board The Patagonia cannot be stopped.

There are others who kill themselves in order to achieve a calm and control they never find in life. Alvarez gives the example of Antonin Artaud, who spent most of his life in lunatic asylums and who wrote:

> If I commit suicide, it will not be to destroy myself but to put myself back together again. Suicide will be for me only one means of violently reconquering myself, of brutally invading my being, of anticipating the unpredictable approaches of God. By suicide, I reintroduce my design in nature. I shall for the first time give things the shape of my will. (131)

Psychoanalysts have suggested that a man may destroy himself not because he wants to die, but because there is a single aspect of himself which he cannot tolerate. Melanie Klein, a follower of Freud, explains that a man

may wish to kill only some aspect of himself,

> under the illusion that its death will free some other part to live. In part he wishes to kill, in part to be killed. But in part, death itself is incidental; what is at issue is not self-murder but an extreme act of placation which will restore some injured part of himself to health and enable it to flourish: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." But for the suicide, overwhelmed by his obscure and obscuring sense of inner chaos and worthlessness, the "eye", the part, is his life itself as he is leading it. He casts away his life in order properly to live. (AA 107-8)

Alvarez calls this "psychic double take" and adds that an attempt at suicide, whether successful or not, "is fundamentally an attempt at exorcism" (110). Like Kirillov in Dostoevsky's The Possessed, several Jamesian suicides illustrate this. Agatha, in "The Modern Warning," kills herself because she does not like that part of herself that she thinks betrayed her brother and her country. Newton Winch, in "A Round of Visits," shoots himself because he does not like the swindler in him. Kirillov said that there are only two reasons why we do not kill ourselves: "pain and the fear of the next

world" (137). Kirillov echoes Schopenhauer, who writes:

> It will generally be found that as soon as the terrors of life reach the point where they outweigh the terrors of death, a man will put an end to his life. But the terrors of death offer considerable resistance; they stand like a sentinel at the gate leading out of this world. Perhaps there is no man alive who would not have already put an end to his life, if this end had been of a purely negative character, a sudden stoppage of existence. There is something positive about it; it is the destruction of the body; and a man shrinks from that, because his body is the manifestation of the will to live.
>
> However, . . . great mental suffering makes us insensible to bodily pain; we despise it; nay, if it should outweigh the other, it distracts our thoughts and we welcome it as a pause in mental suffering. It is this feeling that makes suicide easy. . . . (AA 138)

The excuses offered by suicides, at best trivial, do not constitute viable reasons for their act: "They are like a trivial border incident which triggers off a major

war. The real motives which impel a man to take his own life are elsewhere; they belong to the internal world, devious, contradictory, labyrinthine, and mostly out of sight" (AA 102).

Camus highlights the importance of the psychological aspect of suicide when he declares that his concern in The Myth of Sisyphus is with the relationship between individual thought and suicide (4). The available psychological theories relate suicide variously to inferiority, revenge and antisocial aggression on the one hand and masturbation and attendant guilt on the other. Also popular among psychologists is the view that suicide is a form of the desire to kill someone else (103). Freud believed that, in order to understand suicide, more had to be known about the intricate process of mourning and melancholia.

> [In melancholia] we find that the excessively strong superego which has obtained a hold upon consciousness rages against the ego with merciless violence, as if it had taken possession of the whole of the sadism available in the person concerned. Following our view of sadism, we should say that the destructive component had entrenched itself in the superego and turned against the ego. What is now

> holding sway in the superego is, as it were, a pure culture of the death instinct, and in fact it often enough succeeds in driving the ego into death. ("The Ego and the Id" 19: 53)

Freud tries to throw additional light on the nature of melancholia by comparing it with the normal effect of mourning and says that in some people the reaction to the loss of a loved one or something comparable, instead of producing mourning, produces melancholia. Characteristics of both are the same, except that in addition to dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love and lethargy, melancholia is characterized by a lowering of self-regard ("Mourning and Melancholia" 19: 243-44). Freud sums up this distinction by saying: "In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (246). The melancholic also overcomes the instinct which compels every living thing to live (246). This tendency to suicide makes melancholia interesting, especially because it cannot be reconciled with the pleasure principle.

> So immense is the ego's self-love, which we have come to recognize as the primal state from which instinctual life proceeds, and so vast is the amount of narcissistic libido which we see

> liberated in the fear that emerges at a threat to life that we cannot conceive how that ego can consent to its own destruction. We have long known, it is true, that no neurotic harbours thoughts of suicide which he has not turned back upon himself from murderous impulses against others, but we have never been able to explain what interplay of forces can carry such a purpose through to execution. The analysis of melancholia now shows that the ego can kill itself only if, owing to the return of the object-cathexis, it can treat itself as an object--if it is able to direct against itself the hostility which relates to an object and which represents the ego's original reaction to objects in the external world. Thus in regression from a narcissistic object-choice the object has, it is true, been got rid of, but it has nevertheless proved more powerful than the ego itself. In the two most opposed situations of being most intensely in love and of suicide the ego is overwhelmed by the object, though in totally different ways. (Freud 14: 252)

Robert E. Litman (324-44) synthesizes Freud's

comments on suicide scattered in his numerous works. According to Freud there are general features of the human condition, at least in Western civilization, which make each individual person somewhat vulnerable to suicide. These include the death instinct, with its clinical derivatives--the aggressive instinct directed outward and the destructive instinct directed inward--the splitting of the ego, and the group institutions, family and civilization, which require guilty compliance from every member of the group (338). In addition to the above general features, individual suicides involve certain specific suicide mechanisms. All of them involve a breaking down of ego defenses and the release of increased destructive, instinctual energy. Examples would be the following: loss of love objects, especially those who have been loved in certain dangerous ways; narcissistic injury, symbolically through failure or by direct physiological injury through fatigue or toxins; overwhelming affect--rage, guilt, anxiety, or combinations; extreme splitting of the ego with decathexis of most elements and a setting of one part against the rest; a special suicidal attitude and plan, often based on an identification with someone who was suicidal (338). Freud, in his theory of the death instinct, one of two themes he developed from his essay

"Mourning and Melancholia," defines the instinct as "a nonerotic primary aggression," present from the very beginning of life. He believes that the death instinct works as continually to unbind connections, to destroy, to return what is living to a null but peaceful inorganic state, as Eros, the pleasure principle, works to unite, to renew, to preserve, to disturb (114). Perhaps Freud's death instinct is what Kierkegaard refers to when he writes: "Listen to the newborn infant's cry in the hour of birth--see the death struggles in the final hour--and declare whether what begins and ends in this way can be intended to be enjoyment" (AA 119). Freud also thought that the death instinct took over in melancholia as a kind of disease of the superego. The more virulent the disease, the more suicidal the patient becomes.

There is a more numerous category of suicides to whom the idea of taking their own lives is utterly repugnant--the category Freudian analyst Karl Menninger calls "chronic suicide"--those who will do everything to destroy themselves except take the final responsibility for their actions; alcoholics and drug addicts who kill themselves piecemeal belong to this category. While this category is not particularly relevant to the study of suicides in James, another category--impetuous suicides--those who kill themselves because it is easy to do so

(AA 133), is relevant in some cases. In "The Patgonia," Grace Mavis most probably would not have committed suicide if the ocean surrounding her in the quietness and solitude of the night had not made it so very easy to submit to an impulse. And Roderick Hudson, in spite of the suicidal thoughts he had entertained, probably would not have destroyed himself when he did so, again if the solitude and quietness of the night and the rain-drenched mountain peaks had not made it so very easy to submit to an impulse.

Alvarez also points to the cult of suicide, which has very little to do with real death:

> Thus early-nineteenth-century Romanticism--as a pop phenomenon rather than as a serious creative movement--was dominated by the twin stars of Thomas Chatterton and Goethe's Young Werther. The ideal was "to cease upon the midnight with no pain" while still young and beautiful and full of promise. Suicide added a dimension of drama and doom, a fine black orchid to the already tropical jungle of the period's emotional life." (AA 133)

Though Durkheim rejects the then-popular theory of imitation, he does so with qualification. It is hard to ignore imitation in the nineteenth-century world that was

following the examples of Chatterton and Werther. "With very rare exceptions . . . imitation is not an original factor of suicide. It only exposes a state which is the true generating cause of the act and which probably would have produced its natural effect even had imitation not intervened" (141).

Since suicide is one type of death and sexual and/or love interest may often influence suicides, Philippe Aries' observations about the relationship between sex and death in Western culture merit attention here. Two areas in Western culture in which the omnipotence of nature asserts itself--sex and death--were alien to one another until the end of the Middle Ages. After the sixteenth century love and death came closer together, until by the end of the eighteenth century they formed a veritable corpus of macabre eroticism (A 393). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the world of the imagination and in the depths of the unconscious, love and death came together until their appearances merged. The gradual change came fully to the surface only by the middle of the eighteenth century, "bringing to the collective unconscious things that until then had been carefully expressed and that found expression in violent and destructive conceptions of nature" (A 393). Aries observes a contrast in the attitude toward death of

the man of the Enlightenment who lived in the country and one who lived in the city. He credits the Rousseauistic myth for associating corruption with the city and innocence with the country. The simple man of the country was not afraid of death, whereas the urban man, surrounded by a more complicated machinery of living, was afraid of death (411). "The 'narcotic sweetness' and the wonderful peace associated with death, a product of the seventeenth and eighteenth century imagination, would in the romantic era, lead to a kind of baroque apotheosis that no baroque author would have dared to invent" (411).

Several psychologists see a relationship between love and death in general and suicide in particular. Freud saw suicide as a great passion, like being in love: "In the two opposed situations of being most intensely in love and of suicide, the ego is overwhelmed by the object, though in totally different ways." As in love, things which seem trivial to the outsider, tiresome or amusing, assume enormous importance to those in the grip of the monster, whereas the sanest arguments against it seem to them simply absurd (A 122). According to Weisman, "Disposition toward suicide is at times like sexual desire, because both are preemptory, primitive forces that are difficult to deny" (266).

Stephen Spender, in The Destructive Element, looking for "the figure in the carpet" in James's works, relates his attitude toward sex to his treatment of death and says it may account for the prevalence of death as an ending to his stories. "Castration, or the fear of castration, is supposed to preoccupy the mind with ideas of suicide and death. . . . The preoccupation with death is so emphatic that it is difficult to remember that, as an exception, Maggie did not die at the end of The Golden Bowl" (37). According to Spender, the death theme in Henry James derives significance from the international situation, from its relation to Henry James's own psychology and from its being a part of a tradition derived from Hawthorne and extending beyond James into a great mass of modern imaginative literature (40). The puritanical view of life and providence prevalent in New England is

> the crudest explanation of the moral feeling behind the deaths of so many of his characters. It is a harsh, logical, unscrupulous Puritanism, quite unlike the English respectable Puritanism which simply ignores three-quarters of life. The classical American Puritanism on the contrary hunts out and persecutes the physical side of life. It

> follows that the good people are those who are most successful in thwarting their physical desires; they therefore fall easy victims to people less disastrously preoccupied, unless, indeed quite unaided, they manage to kill themselves by contracting some nameless inner disease, particularly, consumption. But James differed from Hawthorne in being a puritan who did not believe in the puritan morality. (41-42)

Among the young Jamesian protagonists, sickly Morgan Moreen of The Pupil, surrounded by evil in his family, allows himself to be overcome by his illness. Daisy Miller willfully contracts malaria and succumbs to it. The more mature Milly Theale, suffering from an unnamed disease [scholarly speculation on this will be dealt with in the chapter on autobiography], gives up her fight against it when she becomes aware of betrayal at the hands of those she loved and trusted.

Philippe Aries also illustrates the relationship between death and sex by using Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights, a novel he sees as bridging the nineteenth century and the twentieth in the general attitude toward death. "Everything that in an earlier novel would have been erotic, macabre, and diabolical becomes here

passionate, moral, and funereal. The book is a symphony on the intertwined themes of love and death. In one episode we move imperceptibly from the macabre eroticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the beautiful death of the nineteenth century" (442)--the description of Catherine's burial and Heathcliff's plans for union with her after her death illustrates this. Though sex is eminently present in the novel, nothing related to it is openly stated. In spite of the strong flavor of incest in Heathcliff's passion for Catherine, the word is never mentioned. When Heathcliff marries Isabella, no mention is made of their sexual relationship; they even sleep in separate rooms; but a child is conceived immediately after the marriage. "The sexual aspect is clearly present, although very carefully concealed and never mentioned" (443).

The themes of love, death and evil are jointly and individually related to James's treatment of suicide. Stephen Spender sees a common theme--the death of society--in The Princess Casamassima, The American and Roderick Hudson. Though the observation may not be as true of The American and of Roderick Hudson as of The Princess Casamassima, Spender's observation about The Princess Casamassima makes a valid point. In that novel, he sees the death of society

> in an inclusive form, for not only is the society, which the Princess forsakes in her search for life, implicitly decadent (even the gesture of forsaking it is a typical symptom of belonging to it), but the revolutionaries themselves, are suicidal. The intrigue in which Hyacinth finds himself caught, is an assassination as pointless as the duel in which Valentin (in The American) is killed. Hyacinth himself is a feeble revolutionary, and his existence as a bastard makes him a living contradiction in terms of class. The friend on whom he relies seems to go over to the other side, and, at any rate, betrays him. (45-46)

Perhaps as an extension of the intertwining of love and death, Aries points out, during the nineteenth century, the history of death intersects that of evil. In this connection, critics like J. A. Ward and Stephen Spender have emphasized the psychology of death in James's fiction. According to Ward, for Henry James, as for Hawthorne, "evil resides primarily inside the human consciousness" and "though James gives evil external form, it originates in the will or the intellect and reveals its force by causing suffering that is not physical but emotional and mental" (Evil 5). In spite of

the aura of evil surrounding the Marquise de Bellegarde and her older son Urbain, the Gothic horror associated with the death/murder of the old M. Bellegarde remains strictly in the background of The American. Spender also emphasizes the psychological aspect of evil in The American when he points out the psychological element implicit in the little scene in the novel in which the Marquise de Bellegarde, by an act of the will, murders her husband: "The over-developed, destructive, perverse, egoistic will, is the instrument which destroys the Bellegarde family, which prevents them from sharing with an instinctive pleasure the new forms of life (American life) outside them" (Element 42). Christina Light's actions in both Roderick Hudson and The Princess Casamassima, while causing anguish in others, are not intrinsically reprehensible (Ward 5). As Ward goes on to explain, James has so little concern for natural evil that he very often makes death the result of moral rather than of natural evil (7). The deaths of Milly Theale and Daisy Miller come about more as a result of their becoming aware of evil than as a result of illness. Such an attitude toward death and evil would also be in keeping with what Aries identifies as the Christian view: "In Christian doctrine and in ordinary life, death had been seen as a manifestation of evil, an evil that

insinuated itself into life and was inseparable from it. For Christians, death was the moment of a tragic confrontation between heaven and a hell that was itself the most banal expression of evil" (A 473).

With the decline in the powers of hell in the nineteenth century, suffering, injustice and unhappiness become the dominating dimension of evil. Since such evil is directly related to the flesh, death, which leads to the world of spirits, becomes desirable (A 473). The lines from Baudelaire that Aries quotes also illustrate the welcome aspect of death to the Romantic period:

> It is death that consoles and makes us live, alas!
> Death is the goal of life, death is our only hope,
> Which like an elixir cheers and intoxicates
> And gives us heart to live another day....
> It is the famous inn inscribed in the book,
> Where we can eat and sleep and take our ease.
> (A 474)

Aries' comment on this takes us one step further and points to an incentive for suicide: "Some people will soon decide that it may not be necessary to wait so long to 'eat and sleep and take our ease'" (A 532).

William James's opening remarks in his address to the Harvard Young Men's Christian Association, "Is Life Worth Living?," succinctly and humorously express the

complexity associated with suicide. As answer to the question, "Is life worth living?," one well-known response of the time was "it depends on the liver." Mostly a matter of individual temperament, the attitude toward life in the nineteenth century, as William James points out, varies from the incredible optimism of Walt Whitman and the early Rousseau to the pessimism of the later Rousseau and of James's contemporary, poet James Thomson, who in his book The City of Dreadful Night gave expression to black pessimism. In the conclusion to a sermon that is part of the book, the poet says:

> "'O Brothers of sad lives! they are so brief;
> A few short years must bring us all relief:
> Can we not bear these years of laboring breath.
> But if you would not this poor life fulfil,
> Lo, you are free to end it when you will,
> Without the fear of waking after death.'
>
> .....
>
> "'My brother, my poor Brothers, it is thus:
> This life holds nothing good for us,
> But it ends soon and nevermore can be;
> And we knew nothing of it ere our birth,
> And shall know nothing when consigned to earth:
> I ponder these thoughts, and they comfort me.'"
> (pp.4-6)

According to William James, in trying to dissuade a potential suicide from the act, ordinary Christians would remind him of God's commandment against it. James offers his own suggestions to reflecting men. Expressing his concern with melancholy and Weltschmerz, he says, "Too much questioning and too little active responsibility lead, almost as often as too much sensualism does, to the edge of the slope, at the bottom of which lie pessimism and the nightmare or suicidal view of life" (8). Labelling pessimism "essentially a religious disease," he says the final appeal lies in religious faith, which he defines as "faith in the existence of an unseen order of some kind in which the riddles of the natural order may be found explained" (21). He goes on to add that in the more developed religions the natural world has been regarded only as the "mere scaffolding or vestibule of a truer, more eternal world," and "one must in some fashion die to the natural life before one can enter into life eternal" (21). William James identifies the great reflective source of the nightmare view of life as "the contradiction between the phenomena of nature and the craving of the heart to believe that behind nature there is a spirit whose expression nature is" (10). Both good and evil proceed from nature.

William James's exhortation is to trust our religious demands--to live in their light. He also believes that men can live and die by the help of a sort of faith that goes without any dogma or definition (25). Just the assurance that this natural order is not ultimate assures men of such faith that life is worth living in spite of every contrary presumption suggested by its circumstances on the natural plane. Once this assurance is destroyed, "the wild-eyed look at life--the suicidal mood" will set in (26). William James concludes the lecture by saying: "Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact."

Lacking the religious conviction of his philosopher-brother William, Henry James does not permit his fictional characters to draw upon religious faith. Henry substitutes art for traditional religion and consciousness for faith. Despite his attempt to give a positive answer to the question "is there a life after death?" in the essay of that title, he ends up proclaiming his faith in the supremacy of consciousness. I shall elaborate on Henry James's position on religion in the light of this essay and its possible connection to suicide in the next chapter on autobiography. Lionel Trilling, in his analysis of The Princess Casamassima,

goes to the heart of the conflict between the brothers when he identifies the dispute as caused by the antithesis between "Europe-art and America-action" in which "William came to suspect that the preoccupation with art (on Henry's part) was very close to immorality" (77).

In the absence of a solid psychoanalytic theory of suicide (the few available theories are based on Freud's early comments), we are more or less restricted to the comments of sociologists on the subject. As Shneidman explains in "Orientations Toward Death" (Robert W. White, ed. The Study of Lives, p. 206), "Suicidal and/or dying behaviors do not exist in vacuo, but are an integral part of the life style of the individual" (41). During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Emile Durkheim conducted the investigation of suicide that resulted in the publication of his well-known book Suicide: A Study in Sociology. In the early chapters Durkheim tries to negate doctrines that ascribe suicide to extra-social factors such as mental alienation, racial characteristics, heredity, climate, temperature, and finally the then-popular doctrine of "imitation." As a result of his study, Durkheim comes up with categories of suicide. The first one, which he calls egoistic suicide, results from lack of integration of the individual into

society. He supports this by pointing out that the suicide rate is lowest among Catholics and Jews, followers of religions that closely integrate the individual into the collective life. In contrast, among Protestants, because of the high state of individualism, the rate is high. However, of all great Protestant countries, England has fewest suicides, because religious society there is much more strongly constituted (160-61). Egoistic suicide happens also when the individual is not well-integrated into the family. In times of crisis, since society naturally gets to be strongly integrated, the suicide rate falls.

Interestingly, a high rate of integration leads to the second type of suicide, the one Durkheim labels "altruistic": "If excessive individuation leads to suicide, insufficient individuation has the same effects. When man has become detached from society, he encounters less resistance to suicide in himself, and he does so likewise when social integration is too strong" (217). Here the individual takes his own life because of higher commandments. The unquestioning obedience to authority expected of and generally given by members of armed forces, even in modern society, would be a case in point. According to William James, mankind's common instinct for reality, which makes man admire heroism, also makes

sacred that supreme gesture of heroism, a person's willingness to risk death and suffer it heroically in the service he has chosen (Varieties 364).

Among the self-willed deaths in James's fiction, those of Hyacinth Robinson and the protagonists of the two Civil War stories come close to being altruistic ones. The symbolic murder the revolutionaries of The Princess Casamassima plan would require an act of obedience from a committed revolutionary. In the beginning, Hyacinth Robinson is eager to prove his commitment. However, his revolutionary allies recognize the change in him after his European travel. When Poupin accuses him of having changed and declares that that changes everything, an indignant Hyacinth retorts: "Does it alter my sacred vow? There are some things in which one can't change. I didn't promise to believe; I promised to obey" (6: 371). If Hyacinth had carried out the order contained in his letter, that alone would have been suicidal because the murder would have got him the death penalty. However, since he chooses suicide over murder, Hyacinth's death falls short of being altruistic. The protagonists of the two Civil War stories lose their will to live when they realize that the girls they love would be happier with other mates. Since they are motivated by unselfish motives, their deaths approach

altruistic suicide.

A lack of integration into family and society is universally considered the major cause of suicide. Several of the physical suicides in James's fiction appear to have family members and/or friends who care deeply for them. Alienation in these cases originates from inside the characters. Hyacinth Robinson, though without his natural parents, has several surrogate parents. His problem lies in his inability to reconcile within himself the pulls of opposing social strata. "[A] little bookbinder who had so much more of the gentleman about him than one would expect" (5: 198), Hyacinth is "the illegitimate child of a French impropriety who murdered one of her numerous lovers" (5: 36), an English aristocrat. He grows up with a loving foster mother in a lower class tenement. As a young man, he enters upper class society, mainly through the whim of the Princess Casamassima. The narrator tells us, "His present position wasn't of his seeking--it had been forced upon him" (6: 28-29). That is not to say that he was not charmed by its glitter. At about the same time, he is also initiated by a brother-figure, Paul Muniment, into a revolutionary group in London. The revolutionary zeal burns in him for a while. After the death of his foster mother, Pinnie, he has the opportunity to tour Europe. A

change in attitude toward the various classes, which had already been at work in him, surfaces strongly during his travels. He writes to the Princess about how happy he is, how guilty he feels about that happiness and about the contrast between himself and Hoffendahl, the revolutionary leader (6: 143-46). Upon his return home, Hyacinth even entertains thoughts of moving upward into an elite class:

> he proposed to himself to write something. . . . That was to be his transition--into literature: to bind the book, charming as the process might be, was after all much less fundamental than to write it. It had occurred to Hyacinth more than once that it would be a fine thing to produce a rare death-song. (6: 155-56)

Torn between the conflicting loyalties to upper-class society and the anarchists, feeling equally rejected by the Princess and Millicent Henning, and betrayed by Paul Muniment and the Cause, Hyacinth feels all alone; and instead of murdering the enemy of the Cause, he kills himself. Hyacinth's suicide, then, in addition to being the result of a sense of alienation, may also be viewed as an example of a classic psychological type of suicide--the desire to kill someone else turned toward

the self.

Among the other suicides in James's fiction, Robert Graham in "Osborne's Revenge" has a friend who cares deeply for him and would spare no expense in his service. The sense of alienation at being rejected by his wife forces the reformed but rejected Baron de Mauves to take his own life. Roderick Hudson has a mother and a fiancee who adore him, a brother-figure who patronizes him in the best possible way and many who admire his sculpture. An obsession with the charming Christina Light makes him alienate himself from his family, his friends and his work. Inexplicably, like Melville's Bartleby, he chooses not to belong. The transplanted Agatha, in "A Modern Warning," in spite of having a loving husband and a loving brother, had been made to feel like a traitor by the latter. Newton Winch, in "A Round of Visits," through manipulation of large sums of money entrusted to his management, naturally feels alienated. However, strangely enough, he shoots himself immediately after having found a sympathetic ear in an old friend. James's pupil, in the midst of a family he is ashamed of, feels completely alone when he feels that his tutor, the only person to whom he feels close, rejects him. Milly Theale, an heiress, has no family. Fatally ill, she chooses to travel in Europe. Betrayal in love by a young

man and a young woman she trusts makes her feel even more alone in a foreign country.

A third kind of suicide, the one that Durkheim calls "anomic," rampant in modern society, comes about from lack of regulation of the individual by society. Changes in status quo, like sudden wealth or divorce, can bring about suicide. Anomic suicide is essentially passionate in nature, though the passion is ignoble, characterized by anger and all the emotions customarily associated with disappointment (284-85). The suicide of the man misunderstood, very common in days when no recognized social classification is left, belongs to this group. The supreme example would be Goethe's Werther, "the turbulent heart as he calls himself, enamoured of infinity, killing himself from disappointed love, and the case of all artists who, after having drunk deeply of success, commit suicide because of a chance hiss, a somewhat severe criticism, or because their popularity has begun to wane" (286).

Individual forms of suicide could be mixtures of the different categories like ego-anomic, altruistic-anomic, ego-altruistic. With available statistics Durkheim finds a correlation between suicide and social phenomena like family, political and economic society and religious groups. According to Durkheim, the correlation

indicates decisively that each society has a collective inclination towards suicide, a rate of self-homicide which is fairly constant for each society so long as the basic conditions of existence remain the same. The American translator/editor of Durkheim's book sums up the sociological aspect of self-destruction in this way: "The individual inclination to suicide is explicable scientifically only by relation to the collective inclination, and this collective inclination is itself a determined reflection of the structure of the society in which the individual lives" (16). He continues: "From the point of view of psychoanalytic psychiatry, it may be said that every individual has what we may call a suicide-potential, a tendency to self-murder which varies in degree of intensity from individual to individual." The degree of intensity of this potential is established in infancy and early childhood by fears, anxiety, frustrations, loves and hatreds engendered in the individual by the family environment in terms of eliminatory processes, weaning, sex education, sibling rivalry, rejection or over-acceptance by the parents and degree of dependence. Where through excessive mother-love, father-rejection or inferiority induced by siblings the individual is not readied for responsible adulthood according to the customs and mores of the

society in which he is to participate, the suicide potential of an individual may be very high (23). To sum up, "All of the emotions manifested in suicides are, then, explicable in terms of the life-history of the individual, particularly the channeling of the basic psychic configurations through the family" (24). Even in other cases, the trials and tribulations of adulthood may provoke suicide.

After dividing suicide in general into three categories, Durkheim classifies the suicides of the insane into four kinds. When a person kills himself to escape from an imaginary danger or disgrace, or to obey a mysterious order from on high, he calls it maniacal. Lambert's suicide in Watch and Ward approaches this category. A man who demands one hundred dollars from a complete stranger in a hotel lobby obviously must be mentally deranged. Lambert projects an aspect of "grim and hopeless misery" (21) and an "image of fallen prosperity, of degradation and despair" (22). With a face "as white as ashes" and eyes "as lurid as coals" (22), to Roger Lawrence he appears "simply crazy" (22). That the man considers himself thus is obvious from the words he uses to preface his abrupt demand for the money: "You'll think me crazy, I suppose. Well, I shall be soon. Will you lend me a hundred dollars?" (22). His

almost violent reaction to the offer of a tenth of the amount he asked for, his threat to cut his own throat (24) and his eventual suicide, all testify to the deranged state of his mind. Lambert's bizarre suicide, then, might be labelled what Durkheim calls "maniacal."

Durkheim connects melancholy suicide with a general state of extreme depression and exaggerated sadness, causing the patient no longer to realize sanely the bonds which connect him with people and things about him (63). Robert Graham's suicide in "Osborne's Revenge" may be placed in this category. Though Philip Osborne and Robert Graham have been best friends, Osborne is puzzled by Graham's behavior preceding his suicide. Spending the summer at certain medicinal springs, Graham fails to stay in touch with his best friend. When correspondence is demanded, the reply reveals an unsettled mind. Graham claims the "infernal waters," instead of doing him good, have poisoned him. In somewhat incoherent terms he refers to the charms of a young lady that hold him there, while he declares his intention to return and claims he is not "cracked" (13). When he appears, Osborne finds him physically improved, but "morally . . . a sad invalid. He was listless, abstracted, and utterly inactive in mind" (15). He dispatches another incoherent letter from Minnesota,

where his best friend has sent him for diversion. The coherent conclusion to this letter proclaims his suicidal bent: "Life has lost, I don't say its charm . . . but its meaning. I shall live in your memory and your love, which is a vast deal better than living in my own self-contempt. Farewell" (17). The narrator's posthumous appraisal of Graham, who is three years Osborne's senior, as "slight, undersized, feeble in health, sensitive, indolent, whimsical, generous, and in reality of a far finer clay than his friend" (18), and the description of Graham by "disinterested parties" as "an insignificant, lounging invalid, who, in general company, talked in monosyllables, in a weak voice, and gave himself the airs of one whom nature had endowed with the right to be fastidious, without ever having done a stroke of work," help us make an objective evaluation of Robert Graham. His mental state before his suicide clearly blinds him to the strong bond of friendship with Osborne; therefore, he becomes obviously melancholic and attracted by the idea of death. Osborne's investigations after his suicide reveal that his best friend was laboring under delusions of betrayed love, when there actually was no love felt by the object of his affections. A third type of suicide of the insane, what Durkheim labels "obsessive suicide" or "anxiety suicide,"

has no relevance to James's fiction. It is caused by no motive, real or imaginary, but solely by the fixed idea of death which, without clear reason, has taken possession of the person's mind (64).

Roderick Hudson's suicide may be considered a combination of melancholy suicide and Durkheim's fourth category--impulsive or automatic suicide. As unmotivated as the obsessive suicide, impulsive suicide has no cause either in reality or the patient's imagination. Only instead of being produced by a fixed idea obsessing the mind for a shorter or longer period and only gradually affecting the will, it results from an abrupt and immediately irresistible impulse. "The sight of a knife, a walk by the edge of a precipice, etc., engenders the suicidal idea instantaneously and its execution follows so swiftly that patients often have no idea of what has taken place" (65). Durkheim's description of a certain kind of suicide existing from antiquity in his chapter on "Individual Forms of the Different Types of Suicide" seems to fit Roderick Hudson's suicide:

> Its characteristic is a condition of melancholic languor which relaxes all the springs of action. Business, public affairs, useful work, even domestic duties inspire the person only with indifference and aversion. He

> is unwilling to emerge from himself. On the other hand, what is lost in activity is made up for in thought and inner life. In revulsion from its surroundings consciousness becomes self-preoccupied, takes itself as its proper and unique study and undertakes as its main task self-devotion and self-analysis. But by this extreme concentration it merely deepens the chasm separating it from the rest of the universe. The moment the individual becomes so enamoured of himself, inevitably he increasingly detaches himself from everything external and emphasizes the isolation in which he lives, to the point of worship. Self-absorption is not a good method of attaching one's self to others. . . . Reflection, on the other hand, has about it something personal and egoistic; for it is only possible as a person becomes detached from the outside world, and retreats from it into himself. And reflection is the more intense the more complete this retreat. (278-279)

Durkheim's definition of suicide as "death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce the

result" (44) leads us to the second group of suicides in this study, major characters who die because they lose their will to live. Durkheim's definition highlights James's understanding of what might be called "symbolic suicide." The heroes of the two Civil War stories make extraordinary progress toward recuperation when they believe they have the love of their respective young women. However, they both succumb to their illnesses when they realize that they have lost their loves. Clearly, their deaths result from disappointment in love and consequent loss of will to live. In "Longstaff's Marriage" we have the familiar Jamesian situation of the pursuer becoming the pursued. The story also depicts contradictory ways in which a man and a woman respond to rejection and acceptance of love. Reginald Longstaff, who proposes to Diana Belfield while supposedly on his deathbed, has the fortune or misfortune of being refused. The rejection, instead of worsening his condition, makes him recover. Later on, the tables are turned when Diana becomes gravely ill and proposes to Reginald. Instead of holding a grudge and refusing her, Longstaff gladly marries her. However, quite oddly and deliberately, in a paradoxical demonstration of love, Diana dies. Rejection of the deathbed marriage proposal boosts Reginald into vigor and life, while acceptance

under similar circumstances kills Diana. Obviously, Longstaff and Belfield exercise their wills in opposing ways.

The American contains instances of both physical death and symbolic death, self-willed in each case. Stephen Spender considers the entire Bellegarde family of The American suicidal: "It repels the inflow of new American life, and it even suicidally refuses the money which might revive its splendour" (40). In proclaiming Christopher Newman's superiority over the Bellegardes, Spender says, "The vitality of Newman is of a kind which is opposed to that of concentration of an egoistic will which makes the Bellegarde family so hang on to every shred of their decayed grandeur" (43). At least two of its members clearly court death on their own. The younger brother Valentin, in a needless show of chivalry, voluntarily engages in a duel that kills him. His sister Claire de Cintre, the heroine, rather than go against her family's wishes, decides to join a convent and thus, for all practical purposes, renounces life in this world. In this, she may be compared to John Donne, who, according to Alvarez, "finally negotiated his middle-life crisis by taking holy orders instead of his life" (165).

Like Milly Theale, Daisy Miller, the earliest of James's female innocents abroad, also dies, as much from

her Roman fever as from losing her will to live. Her surrender, while she is still very young, in the face of adverse criticism is also in the Romantic tradition. The Romantic notions of youth, waste and self-willed early death come together also in the premature death of Morgan Moreen in The Pupil.

Perhaps the most touching of the symbolic suicides takes place in The Wings of the Dove when Milly Theale turns her face to the wall after she is convinced of betrayal. Much of the beauty and aesthetic value of the novel lies in James's careful and persistent delineation of the power of Milly's will in her life as well as in her death. After painstakingly demonstrating her intense will to live through the probing of her consciousness and that of Susan Stringham in lengthy passages, James reports her fatal resolve indirectly through the simple sentence, "she had turned her face to the wall" (20: 323) thus underscoring the active nature of her will in her death. In a conversation with Kate Croy immediately before Milly's death, Merton Densher tells her that Lord Mark's visit was the lethal blow. He goes on to explain: "The way it affected her was that it made her give up. She has given up beyond all power to care again, and that's why she is dying. . . . One can see now that she was living by will . . . her will, at a given moment,

broke down, and the collapse was determined by that fellow's dastardly stroke" (20: 320-21). Milly's strong will to live is clearly evident throughout the novel in her attempt to live life to the fullest even after she becomes aware of the fatal nature of her illness. F. O. Matthiessen points to the end of the chapter that introduces Milly as proof that James intended her to be far from suicidal (Major Phase 63-64). During their brief sojourn in the Alps, Milly's friend and confidante, Susan Stringham, comes upon Milly one afternoon seated on the "dizzy edge" of a precipice, on "a slab of rock at the end of a short promontory." In the passage detailing Mrs. Stringham's thought processes, James inserts one sentence that removes beyond the shadow of a doubt the fear that Milly entertained any suicidal thoughts:

> Mrs. Stringham stifled a cry on taking in what she believed to be the danger of such a perch for a mere maiden; her liability to slip, to slide, to leap, to be precipitated by a single false movement, by a turn of the head--how could one tell?--into whatever was beneath. A thousand thoughts, for the minute, roared in the poor lady's ears, but without reaching, as happened, Milly's. It was a commotion that left our observer intensely still and

> holding her breath. What had first been offered her was the possibility of a latent intention--however wild the idea--in such a posture; of some betrayed accordance of Milly's caprice with a horrible hidden obsession. But since Mrs. Stringham stood as motionless as if a sound, a syllable, must have produced the start that would be fatal, so even the lapse of a few seconds had partly a reassuring effect. It gave her time to receive the impression which, when she some minutes later softly retraced her steps, was to be the sharpest she carried away. This was the impression that if the girl was deeply and recklessly meditating there she was n't meditating a jump; she was on the contrary, as she sat, much more in a state of uplifted and unlimited possession that had nothing to gain from violence. She was looking down on the kingdoms of the earth, and though indeed that of itself might well go to the brain, it would n't be with a view to renouncing them. (19: 23-24)

Soon after this Milly reappears at the inn where Susan Stringham is still meditating on what she saw and its implications:

> For she now saw that the great thing she had brought away was precisely a conviction that the future was n't to exist for her princess in the form of any sharp or simple release from the human predicament. It would n't be for her a question of a flying leap and thereby of a quick escape. It would be a question of taking full in the face the whole assault of life, to the general muster of which indeed her face might have been directly presented as she sat there on her rock. Mrs. Stringham was thus able to say to herself during still another wait of some length that if her young friend still continued absent it would n't be because--whatever the opportunity--she had cut short the thread. She would n't have committed suicide; she knew herself unmistakeably reserved for some more complicated passage; this was the very vision in which she had, with no little awe, been discovered. (19: 125)

In addition to the narrator's assurance that the "thousand thoughts, for the minute, [that] roared in the poor lady's ears" did not reach Milly's ear, we now have Susan Stringham's categorical conclusion that "She [Milly] would n't have committed suicide." In view of

what happens later when Milly gives up on life, Mrs. Stringham's assurance that Milly "knew herself unmistakeably reserved for some more complicated passage" is full of ironic import. Later on, Milly describes herself to Sir Luke as "a survivor--a survivor of a general wreck" (19: 241). Even when she returns from the doctor's office she cannot help entertaining hopeful thoughts: "It was of course as one of the weak that she had gone to him--but oh with how sneaking a hope that he might pronounce her, as to all indispensables, a veritable young lioness!" (19: 251) Only through a symbolic act, and not through any violence would Milly reveal the loss of her will to live. As Matthiessen points out, "One aspect of her situation that he [James] penetrates with psychological depth is the relation between her delicate vitality and the will to live. Sir Luke knows that she needs love to sustain her, to relax the tension of her loneliness, and . . . he urges her to 'take the trouble' to live" (67). James devotes a scene to Milly's meditations as she returns from the doctor's office through Regent's Park. At the end of her meditations, she stands up and looks "at her scattered melancholy comrades--some of them so melancholy as to be down on their stomachs in the grass, burrowing; she saw once more, with them, those two faces of the question

between which there was so little to choose for inspiration. It was perhaps superficially more striking that one could live if one would; but it was more appealing, insinuating, irresistible in short, that one would live if one could" (19: 254). As in the case of Daisy Miller, the perception of evil in the world surrounding her puts a sudden end to Milly's life.

What emerges from this survey of philosophical, psychological and sociological dimensions of suicide is the conviction that James portrays his fictional suicides, both physical and symbolic, quite realistically, both from sociological and psychological perspectives. While it is possible to hold the strong Romantic elements of James's fiction as detracting from realism, I would like to emphasize that having some Romantic characteristics does not preclude realism. As a matter of fact, in the treatment of suicides, James's Romanticism even enhances his realism because it represents a popular theatrical attitude of the times. Furthermore, the fictional treatment of death, particularly suicide, is bound to have some melodramatic elements. In this regard, Barzun's comments on James's treatment of death are apt:

> It is simply because life in society makes multitudinous occasions for pain that James's

studies report evil as nearly always triumphant. The possible complications of life--and none are impossible--translate themselves into plots for stories, in which it is remarkable with what disregard of their intelligence or merit the guileless are undone. Lovers--on whom James lavishes his manly tenderness--are separated by money or the lack of it; by misunderstanding or excessive insight; by secrets or revelations; by pride or humility. Free will makes the wrong choice in either case simply because it is will. . . . Death alone makes life under such conditions bearable, and this may be why even when he works in his most delicate impressionist manner, James is not afraid of crashing cymbals for the denouement. Daisy Miller dies; the girl on the S. S. Patagonia jumps overboard; the pupil wastes away; Valentin de Bellegarde is killed in a duel;. . . strictly considered, all these deaths are unnecessary, implausible; but they are indispensable as a relief from and as sanctions for James's moral judgment, which is that the world is too full of desires and not sufficiently full of people in whom desire

is purified by grace. (260)

That his suicidal characters can be used to illustrate conclusions on self-destruction reached by sociologists, psychologists and philosophers is the ultimate testimony to his realism. In delineating the mores, the follies and the foibles of his milieu and his period, he is certainly in step with his time, while in the matter of technique he is ahead of his time. Even in the matter of statistics, James's suicides parallel the trends in society. More men than women and more single people than married people will their own deaths. Durkheim points out that the suicides of women form only a small fraction of that of males (99). Only two out of James's ten physical suicides are women. This also confirms Durkheim's observation in relation to egoistic suicides that suicides among married persons are much fewer, though not due to the influence of conjugal society, but of the family society (189). With the breakup of the marriage, more divorced men than women commit suicide, because men enjoy more benefits in marriage. Among the total of twenty suicides (ten physical and ten symbolic) in this study, only five have ever been married. Two of those are men who shoot themselves--the deranged widower Lambert in Watch and Ward and the desperate Baron de Mauves, whose wife

refuses to be reconciled with him. The widowed Claire de Cintre of The American takes the veil, while Agatha of "The Modern Warning" poisons herself in spite of a happy marriage, and Diana of "Longstaff's Marriage" wills her death. There is something of Richard Cory in the unexpectedness of many of these suicides; Charles W. Wahl's view of suicide as a magical act that enables a victim to fulfill many of his unfulfilled wishes in real life offers a rational explanation for this irrational act:

> by equating the world with the self, [the suicide] affirms the same fallacy as the medieval mystics who said, . . . 'Nothing outside my own mind is real; the world and all persons in it are, in reality, me.' Therefore, to kill oneself is to kill everything that there is, the world and all other persons. (29-30)

In conclusion, as Edel points out in the general introduction to The Complete Tales of Henry James, James wanted "to leave a multitude of pictures of [his] time, projecting [his] small circular frame upon as many different spots as possible" (7). Without doubt, in the depiction of self-willed death, as in other aspects of his milieu--artistic, upper-class, leisured--he did succeed in what he wanted to accomplish.

Notes

[1]Among the studies on suicide, A. Alvarez's The Savage God, Shneidman's Essays in Self-Destruction and Clues to Suicide and Durkheim's landmark Suicide: A Study in Sociology are the most illuminating. Alvarez's penetrating study of suicide, looking at the phenomenon from the perspective of literature to see how and why it colors the imaginative world of literature, is particularly relevant to the analysis of James's fictional suicides. According to Alvarez, "Since the artist is more aware of his motives than most people, and better able to express himself, it seemed likely that he would offer illuminations which the writings of sociologists, psychiatrists and statisticians lacked" (xiii-xiv). Alvarez makes a distinction between his subject, suicide and literature, and suicide in literature. Though his purpose is not dealing with specific literary suicides, but with power the act has created over the creative imagination, it does indirectly help us understand the suicides in literature in the light of their times (141). Commenting on the various meanings suicide held for various literary figures, he points out that while for Thomas Chatterton it meant an

alternative to a slow death by starvation, for Sylvia Plath it was an attempt to get herself out of a desperate corner which her own poetry had boxed her into (xiv). He adds later that to Plath "It was an act she felt she had a right to as a grown woman and a free agent, in the same way that she felt it to be necessary to her development, given her queer conception of the adult as a survivor, an imaginary Jew from the concentration camps of the mind" (20). Alvarez's survey of literary suicides from ancient times to present, along with comments from divines and learned men, makes his work an invaluable source for the study of the subject. Himself an attempted suicide and friend of Sylvia Plath, Alvarez offers the additional value of autobiographical experience to his study. Philippe Aries' The Hour of Our Death, which surveys the various attitudes toward death over the centuries in western culture, serves as a fitting background to the particualr form of death under study here.

[2]I have restricted the definitions here to those that apply to Jamesian suicides. Essays in Self-Destruction, edited by Edwin Shneidman, contains many other equally valid definitions of the topic that would enhance the understanding of the sociological and psychological ramifications of suicide.

Chapter 3

Autobiography

Leon Edel points to the importance of autobiography in James's work thus: "Henry James, inexhaustible younger brother, making himself small and quiet among the other Jameses, turned into the depths of himself to fashion a fictional world based on the realities around him in which elder brothers were vanquished, fathers made to disappear, mothers put into their place" (Life 1: 57). Autobiography is important to the study of the Jamesian myth not only because James draws upon a few personal experiences and upon people he knew as models for fictional characters, but also because he draws upon what I would call "the collective unconscious of the James family." James's highly subjective method further intensifies the autobiographical element of his fiction. The collective unconscious of the Jameses would lead into two related themes that are also relevant to Henry James's fictional treatment of suicides--that of regret over the unlived life and a consequent emphasis on an intensity of life that leads to a somewhat hedonistic exhortation to live, and that of the will to live and the will to die--all of which he had occasion to observe in members of his family.

Henry James appears to have encountered more than his fair share of deaths of people near and dear to him. In his immediate past, William of Albany had surrendered to death two young wives, two sons who never reached adulthood and one son, his oldest, the one with demonstrated ability in business, who died in the prime of his life (F 33). Edel emphasizes the overwhelming presence of death in Henry James's life when he lists in the concluding chapter of the "Scenes from a Boyhood" section of the biography a number of people who were part of James's "chronicle of early deaths, arrested careers, broken promises, orphaned children" (AUT 10):

> The small boy saw only the beginning of these stories of his relatives, but he lived to be present also at their endings. There were other cousins and uncles who died almost before their lives began: Minny Temple, the second daughter of the senior Henry's second sister, Catherine James, a bright Albany cousin known briefly to the small boy, but later destined, on a reacquaintance at Newport, to play a large role in his life; Gus Barker, the second son of Jeannette or Janet James, Catherine James's oldest sister, whose mother died giving birth to him. . . . There was Gus's brother, Bob

> Barker, with his promise as a sculptor; Johnny James, with a talent for music cut short by death; the four uncles, Augustus, John, Edward and Howard, ... little girl cousins encountered in Paris; Vernon King with his European background and his sad end ... (and) Aunt Ellen King James, 'softly spectral' with ringlets, who died at 26--when Henry was 6. (Life 1: 88-89)

In his two-volume biography of Henry James, Leon Edel mentions over eighty deaths, including those of family members, friends, literary figures and artists, national leaders like Abraham Lincoln and Queen Victoria and other influential personages, three dogs and a pet chameleon. These include three persons close to James who committed suicide--Clover (Mrs. Henry) Adams, Constance Fenimore Woolson, grandniece of James Fenimore Cooper (Life 2: 75), and Elizabeth Robins's husband (Life 2: 118). Another suicide in the background, that of a distant relative, Johnny James, deserves mention because of his family name and because his deathbed was attended by the twenty-first President of the United States, Chester A. Arthur (Life 1: 650). Howard Feinstein, William James's biographer, refers to two more suicides close to the Jameses omitted by Edel--

William Morris Hunt, American painter, who was teacher to both William and Henry, and Dr. William Prince, husband of Katharine Barber James (144). Except in the case of Fenimore, references to these suicides are scant in James's letters. Surprisingly, his letters contain nothing but the most casual references to Clover's suicide. In a letter of January 7, 1886, to Elizabeth Boott, almost as a parenthetical observation sandwiched between apparent trivia, he refers to "poor Clover Adams's self-destruction" and comments, "She succumbed to hereditary melancholy" (L 3: 107). James makes another casual reference to the matter in a letter to Edwin L. Godkin on February 6, 1886, when he mentions how "poor Mrs. Adams found . . . the solution of the knottiness of existence" (3: 111).

Though James's friendship with Miss Woolson was one that developed much later in life (he had known Clover since childhood), the effect of Fenimore's suicide was much more devastating on him. His earliest reaction to her death is expressed in a letter of January 26, 1894, to Dr. Baldwin. Unaware of the cause and nature of her death, James expresses "amazement and distress" and describes her as a "poor isolated and fundamentally tragic being." He politely expands on the idea:

> She was intrinsically one of the saddest and

> least happy natures I have ever met; and when I ask myself what I feel about her death the only answer that comes to me is from what I felt about the melancholy, the limitations and the touching loneliness of her life. I was greatly attached to her and valued exceedingly her friendship. She had no dread of death and no aversion to it--rather a desire and even a passion for it; and infinite courage and a certain kind of fortitude. (L 3: 457)

When he finds out the nature of her death, he expresses shock over the "deplorable attendant circumstances" (458, 459) and goes on to add, "She had always been . . . a woman so little formed for positive happiness that half one's affection for her was, in its essence, a kind of anxiety" (460). In letters to various friends on the topic (3: 457-67), he repeatedly says that he would have gone to her funeral, except for the manner of her death. He also reiterates his observation about her subjection to melancholy and some kind of insanity and how half of his friendship was always anxiety. In a letter of February 2, 1894, to Katherine De Kay Bronson, he writes about the incongruity of the act:

> With the general patience, reserve and dainty dignity, as it were, of her life. . . . she was

> free, independent, successful--very successful indeed as a writer--and liked, peculiarly, by people who knew her. She had near relations who adored her and who were in a position to do much for her--especially as she was fond of them. But it was all reduced to ashes by the fact that a beneficent providence had elaborately constructed her to suffer (467).

Despite his declaration of perplexity over the inexplicability of Miss Woolson's act, it is obvious that James was well aware of the inexplicability of suicides. Long before Constance Fenimore Woolson committed suicide, several of his fictional characters had willed their own deaths under equally sudden, unexpected and inexplicable circumstances. Like Fenimore, his suicides such as Roderick Hudson and Agatha had near relations who adored them. Even Hyacinth Robinson, though without legitimate blood relatives, had many who cared about him. In view of the fact that all his self-destructive characters, those who resort to violent means as well as those who passively succumb to death, will their deaths because of psychological reasons, it is also interesting to note that James points to internal, psychological causes for the suicides of Clover and Fenimore.

That several members of the James family, including

three of the best-known--Henry James, Sr., his son William and his daughter Alice--entertained suicidal thoughts is significant in the study of novelist James's treatment of suicides. In terms of frequency, attending funerals and writing condolence letters appear to be important activities in James's life. If, like George Stransom, Henry James had chosen to create his own altar of the dead, with one candle representing each departed friend or relative, his altar would have been ablaze with candles.

The few events from James's life that have found their way into his fiction contribute to the suicide myth in significant ways. I use the term "the collective unconcious of the James family" to refer to the myriad and intense experiences and conflicts that went into the making of William of Albany's dynasty. Whether he was conscious of it or not, those experiences were part of his ancestry that contributed to novelist James's temperament, aesthetic as well as personal. Biographers of the two most illustrious members of the clan--the philosopher-psychologist William and his younger brother Henry--emphasize the strong-willed nature of the Jameses that enabled them to fight and survive negative odds. Conflicts between parents and children and the struggle to establish individual identities characterize the lives

of William of Albany's descendants. The collective unconscious of the James family includes the parallel nightmare experiences the three most famous members of the family had, the crippling experiences of the two Henrys, the suicidal thoughts entertained by several members, their battle with religion and the widely recognized sense of rivalry between the brothers William and Henry. The importance of autobiography in the delineation of the will to live and its opposite, evident in the male Jameses, is also illustrated by Minny Temple and the novelist's sister Alice James at two ends of the spectrum. Biographical data that would appear nothing out of the ordinary in the annals of family histories would have influence on Henry's writing. Feinstein underscores the importance of heredity to the Jameses when he says: "William of Albany's descendents were heir not only to his vast fortune but to the struggle over vocation and the self-definition that it implied for the next two generations, if not beyond" (57). The quest for identity that characterizes the Jameses also characterizes many of the suicidal characters in Henry's fiction. As a young novelist he also drew upon the question of birthright that haunted his father. Like William of Albany, concerned about the possible harmful effects of wealth on his son's soul, Rowland Mallet's

father in Roderick Hudson creates a will that leads to litigation and that is broken by his son.

The strong will to live that leads to survival in the face of devastating experiences for the novelist's father and older brother characterizes some of the admirable people in James's fiction. By the power of his will, the senior Henry triumphs over a trial through fire at the age of thirteen that leaves him crippled and over a later nightmarish experience that he would call "a vastation" that resulted in a collapse of mental well-being. In the second experience, evil, "in that shape that squatted invisible, had come to reveal to the elder Henry James that he must not question the word of God but await the Truth of Divine Revelation." In psychological terms, Edel explains this as the result of years of inner doubt (Life 1: 30). However, "Within him the will to live, the will to manhood, eventually triumphed over the disintegrating forces of a divided self" (31).

The senior Henry soon found the antidote for this terrifying experience in various forms of religion starting with Swedenborgianism. William James records a similar experience that had far-reaching and pervasive influence on his life and career. In the middle of a period during which he was physically ill and mentally perched perilously on the "ragged edge of his

consciousness," he suddenly experienced "a horrible fear of [his] own existence." He records that the particular experience of melancholia always had a religious meaning to him:

> I mean that the fear was so invasive and powerful that if I had not clung to scripture-texts like "The eternal God is my refuge," etc. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden," etc. "I am the resurrection and the life," etc., I think I should have grown really insane. (Grattan 122-23)

Just as the senior Henry found the meaning of Selfhood in Swedenborgianism, his firstborn son would find a definition of Free Will in the essays of the French philosopher Charles Renouvier: "the sustaining of a thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts" (Life 1: 383). This would lead William to write in his diary, "My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will" (Life 1: 383), a sentence that would later be frequently quoted. In an extension of the concept of Free Will, Alice James would recognize that she did have a choice over the fate of her body. Both she and her oldest brother would successfully resist suicidal tendencies and succumb to natural causes. A strong will to live would enable the senior Henry and his

older son to overcome such depression and lead productive lives to ripe old ages. For these two, overcoming such fears would become lifelong enterprises.

A nightmare/vision comparable to the ones experienced by the two older Jameses will also have sweeping effects on the life and work of the novelist. In A Small Boy and Others, in the middle of the chapter describing his first visits to the Luxembourg and the Louvre, James places a nightmare dreamed many years later. Overwhelmed and bewildered by the sense of power and glory and style of the Louvre, his mind goes back to the Second Empire and an extraordinary dream vision culminates in the sudden pursuit by a figure that retreated in terror; he recalls with pleasure that he, in his "appalled state, was probably still more appalling than the awful agent, creature or presence" (AUT 196-97). In this victorious experience, Edel sees James's initiation into style associated with power (Life 1: 61). More importantly, this nightmare would have profound influence on James's themes. The often-repeated motif of the pursuer becoming the pursued and the appalled becoming appalling has its origins in this.

"The Jolly Corner" best dramatizes the theme and combines other autobiographical elements central to James--themes such as the tensions between past and

present and between Europe and America. The story also contains the one exception to the absence of the probing of the suicidal consciousness I referred to in the previous chapter. Spencer Brydon, being stalked by his alter ego, clearly contemplates suicide. James records Brydon's thoughts thus:

> He knew--yes, as he had never known anything--that, should he see the door open, it would all too abjectly be the end of him. . . . It would send him straight about to the window he had left open, and by that window, be long ladder and dangling rope as absent as they would, he saw himself uncontrollably insanely fatally take his way to the street. (17: 471-72)

In the pages following this James details Brydon's mental processes. The loss of consciousness during his encounter with the spectral presence eliminates the necessity for the crucial decision in regard to his fatally taking his way to the street. The theme of the reversal of roles would later play an important role in a story containing a suicide. In "A Round of Visits," Mark Monteith, seeking a confidant with whom to share his burden, himself becomes Newton Winch's confidant. Also, in such of the suicide fictions where the growth of the witness character takes place, we may note a reversal of

roles. Characters like Daisy Miller, Euphemia Cleve and Milly Theale, all seekers in their own ways, unwittingly become instruments of learning. While their quests end in self-willed deaths, others who have been watching them gain knowledge. I shall deal with such unconscious initiations in detail in the final chapter of this dissertation on the Quest theme in relation to suicides in James.

In addition to this psychological experience, two great events would have notable physical and psychological ramifications for James's life and work. In Notes of a Son and Brother Henry James writes about two great events--the breaking out of the Civil War and "a private catastrophe or difficulty, bristling with embarrassments...a physical mishap...a single vast visitation [comparable to his father's 'vastation']. . . a horrid even if an obscure hurt" that kept him from participating in the great event of the War. In an encounter with a barn fire in Newport, paralleling his father's experience, "jammed into the acute angle between two high fences" (Life 1: 146), an awkward position, he and his friends helped put out the fire. Like his father, the young Henry also survives his trial by fire--as a cripple.

Edel relates this event in Henry's life to "A Most

Extraordinary Case," "a short story about a Civil War veteran who survives the conflict without physical injury but is stricken by illness at the end" (Life 1: 151). Though the nature of his illness is not disclosed, Colonel Mason's physician attributes his failure to recuperate to his lack of will, and Mason readily agrees (CT 1: 329). The situation changes when an affectionate aunt takes Mason and cares for him. He recovers remarkably, only to lose his will to live again when he discovers that his patroness's niece, Caroline Hofmann, with whom he had secretly fallen in love, has decided to marry the doctor:

> The extraordinary case was as mystifying to the doctor as the obscure hurt was to Henry James. The doctor was, however, unaware of the subjective elements which caused Mason to give up the fight; and Henry James was unaware of the subjective elements which conditioned and at the same time obscured his hurt. He gives us a very positive clue in his final account when he asserts that 'what was interesting from the first was my not doubting in the least its [the obscure hurt's] duration'(151).

Other early life experiences with possible connection to his novels and tales, especially to those

containing suicide, include some early reading and travels through Europe and some of his many friendships with older women. Edel suggests that young Henry's casual encounter with a book (The Initials by the Baroness Tautphoeus) containing an international situation and a lurid suicide and "an atmosphere not unlike the first page of Daisy Miller" (Life 1: 80) was greatly influential. James's own travels in Europe, starting as an infant, and his yearning for European culture make him send many of his characters, protagonists as well as minor ones, to Europe as seekers. His own ambivalence toward the two continents makes such travels produce sometimes beneficial and sometimes destructive results in the travellers. In the case of his suicidal characters, such journeys produce invariably destructive effects. Since the displacement resulting from an international journey and the related quest theme call for detailed study in relation to James's treatment of suicides, I shall explore them in greater detail in chapters devoted to them. Among the many attractions of Europe, one in particular, the Colosseum in Rome, makes a lasting impression on James. Perhaps because of its bloody associations, James makes it play a crucial role in the self-willed deaths of two of his protagonists, Daisy Miller and Roderick Hudson. Daisy contracts fatal

malaria at the Colosseum. Roderick, in an attempt to impress Christina, in daredevil fashion tries to pluck a flower from a precarious ledge, foreshadowing his suicide in the Alps.

Among Henry's many friendships with older women, Edel sees his association with Mrs. Sarah Wister in Rome as reflected in "Madame de Mauves," which "embodied his experiences as a young unmarried man enjoying the friendship of a married woman" (Life 1: 364-65). The tale, embodying the earlier themes of old and new, corruption and innocence in more subtle and less morbid form, is "the first of a long series of stories written by James about idealistic Americans observing, in their innocence, complex international marriages" (365). Wealthy American Euphemia Cleve at her European convent school had become interested in love-romances of the type that were responsible, at least partially, for Emma Bovary's undoing. However, unlike Emma, who yields to the demands of the flesh through illicit affairs, Euphemia fiercely holds on to her puritanical virtue and endures "self-righteous suffering" (Life 1: 365) in staying married to her dissipated, titled, French husband, a combination of Richard Cory and Browning's Duke of Ferrara. The young American Longmore, who observes her closely, thinks he loves her. Euphemia

resists his suggestion of escape. Longmore himself, a typical Jamesian observer like his creator, would rather watch than get involved. The tale might also be considered as expressing Henry's ambivalence toward the opposite sex. Longmore wonders at one point whether "it is better to cultivate an art than to cultivate a passion." According to Edel, "For Henry the answer was clear. One cultivated an art passionately" (Life 1: 367).

Henry James's concern with identity, a crucial concern in his suicide fiction, began early in life and manifested itself in a sustained manner in his relation with his brother William. Henry's view of William as a rival and an alter ego colors his treatment of his suicidal males of artistic bent. Insofar as suicides are failed quests and the concern with identity is central to many of James's self-destructive characters, such concern is important to a study of his fictional suicides. William and Henry searched long and hard to find their niches in life. William, who experimented with fields as varied as painting, science, medicine, religion and psychology, took longer to find himself. William's concern with identity was so great that during the mental depression that accompanied his illness he was constantly preoccupied with the idea of suicide and

"later in life maintained that a man was not physically complete unless he had meditated on self-destruction" (Grattan 19-20). Early in life, Henry demonstrated his interest in his identity by protesting against "the parental failure to let him have a distinctive name and (by the same token) an identity of his own" (Life 1: 50). This concern with identity as a second son was carried over into his novels and tales in the predilection for second sons. As Edel aptly summarizes,

> sometimes he kills off elder brothers or turns them into villains; sometimes his hero is an only son, usually with a widowed mother. He confers on them an ideal fatherless and brotherless state. In his memoirs he has told us how 'parentally bereft cousins were somehow more thrilling than parentally provided ones'. They constituted his first childish conception of the possibilities residing in their 'enviable lot to be so little fathered and mothered.' (Life 1: 51)

James's suicidal characters include several second sons--Roderick Hudson, Valentin de Bellegarde and Morgan Moreen. Roderick Hudson, though an only child during the action of the novel, had an older brother who had been killed in the Civil War. He complains that he has to

fill two roles, that of his brother and of himself. The chivalrous and gentle Valentin de Bellegarde in The American, who invites suicide through an ill-advised duel, offers a charming contrast to his villainous older brother, the Marquis. Morgan Moreen of "The Pupil" "is the sensitive and perceptive member of a mendacious family whose first born, Ulick Moreen, is anaemic and ineffectual" (Life 1: 52). Hyacinth Robinson of The Princess Casamassima, though an only child, for all practical purposes has an older brother in Paul Muniment, whose relationship with Hyacinth has parallels with the William/Henry relationship. In contrasting Hyacinth's genuine affection for Paul with the latter's ruthlessness, Edel points out: "The portrait of the two is James's characteristic picture of the younger man who feels misunderstood by the older, to whom he is nevertheless deeply attached. There is a touch of William James in Paul Muniment" (Life 1: 777). At the same time, there is also a touch of Henry in Paul. The latter's taking care of his invalid sister parallels the novelist's stewardship of his sister Alice. In Roderick Hudson, in the figure of his patron/mentor Rowland Mallet, the sculptor has a surrogate older brother. As a matter of fact, James has invested enough autobiographical details in Roderick and Rowland for us

to view the latter even as an alter ego. The other suicidal protagonist of artistic bent, Hyacinth Robinson, may also be viewed as having an alter ego/older brother in Paul Muniment. It seems reasonable to conclude that the surrogate brothers in the suicide fiction like Rowland Mallet and Paul Muniment reflect the alter ego element from James's life.

An important aspect of the alternate ego motif lies in Henry James's "endless fascination in the contrast between those whose vocation was 'to be' and those whose ambition was 'to do' (Spender 104). James's own interest lay in being rather than doing. In his response to Henry Adams' pessimistic comments on Notes of a Son and Brother, Henry makes his strongest claim to a life of action:

> Of course we are lone survivors, of course the past that was our lives is at the bottom of an abyss--if the abyss has any bottom; . . . You see I still, in presence of life. . . have reactions--as many as possible--and the book I sent you is proof of them. It's, I suppose, because I am that queer monster, the artist, an obstinate finality, an inexhaustible sensibility. Hence the reactions--appearance, memories, many things, go on playing upon it

> with consequence that I note and 'enjoy' (grim word!) noting. It all takes doing--and I do. I believe I shall do yet again--it is still an act of life. (L 4: 705-706)

Edel comments on this: "Old, tired, Henry James continued to perform the acts of life and nothing showed this more than his last writings" (Life 2: 768).

Ever since the "obscure hurt" kept him out of active participation in the Civil War, James felt himself to be an observer of life and not a participant in it. This attitude, carried into his technique of fiction writing, reveals itself in the use of the famous Jamesian point of view, in the Jamesian confidant as a vehicle of his narration, and in the typical Jamesian protagonist. Protagonists like Lambert Strether in The Ambassadors, John Marcher in "The Beast in the Jungle" and Rowland Mallet in Roderick Hudson represent Jamesian protagonists who typically pervade the outskirts of life looking in, not participating. Their vocation is "to be" and not "to do." Among the female characters, Milly Theale and Kate Croy stand for the two opposing categories. According to Virginia Fowler, "Kate can be seen to function for Milly as an alter-ego or ego ideal: she is the person Milly would in some ways like to be but believes she cannot be and she is both loved and hated by Milly" (91). Fowler

goes on to identify Kate as Milly's first experience of the Other. Since she views her difference from Kate as a deficiency within herself, the discovery of such a deficiency "leads to a desire for unity, which in itself prompts a kind of identification with the Other. This desire for unity is, of course, ultimately a desire for death. Milly Theale's response to her encounter with the Other is most fully expressed after she realizes that Kate Croy knows Merton Densher" (92). Her death wish, then, must begin at this point.

In addition to the alter ego aspect, other autobiographical features characterize Hyacinth Robinson. In his preface to the New York edition, James declares his kinship with "little" Hyacinth Robinson:

> He sprang up for me out of the London pavement. To find his possible adventure interesting, I had only to conceive his watching the same public show, the same innumerable appearances, I had watched myself, and of his watching very much as I had watched; save indeed for one little difference. This difference would be that so far as all the swarming facts should speak of freedom and ease, knowledge and power, money, opportunity and satiety, he should be able to revolve round them but at the most

> respectful of distances and with every door of approach shut in his face. (P 1087)

The "one little difference" happens to be a big one. Economic status and family background aside, aesthetically James felt akin to Hyacinth. He elaborates on this kinship in the preface thus: "Accessible through his imagination, as I have hinted, to a thousand provocations and intimations, he would become most acquainted with destiny in the form of a lively inward revolution" (P 1097). We may also notice the similarity between Hyacinth and his artistic predecessor, Roderick Hudson. As Edel points out,

> Hyacinth and Roderick were evolved from the same imaginative sources and their conflicts are similar. Hyacinth, for all his upbringing in the slums, has as much of New England sense of duty as his predecessor. Roderick had been unable to reconcile his devotion to his art and his passion for Christina. Hyacinth feels an overriding responsibility to his class. But he aspires also to the world of ease, in which he has met the beautiful princess. Like Roderick, he cannot bring together his two worlds. (1: 773)

Perhaps a dissatisfaction with himself as a

perennial observer of life led to Henry James's equal concern with living life to the fullest that is expressed in a somewhat hedonistic exhortation to live life to the fullest reiterated in several works. His mother's cousin Helen and her family may have struck home to James, early in life, the necessity to live life to the fullest. Her "highly respectable but quite negligible husband," a "spectral spouse" whom James mentions in his autobiography (77, 79), had talked often of the grand tour he would some day make; when he finally made the journey to England, the shock overpowered him. There was "a snap of the tense cord . . . he just landed and died" (82-83). Her ward and brother, Henry Wyckoff, whose fortune she controlled and doled out to him a dime at a time, "failed to rise to the estate" when he finally inherited it (Life 1: 88). Two such instances of unlived life that James had opportunity to observe at close quarters must have influenced him strongly in favor of the principle of living life to the fullest while one can. Though best known as Strether's advice to Little Bilham in The Ambassadors, the idea is expressed in several works, including some containing suicide. A notebook entry of October 31, 1895, at Torquay credits William Dean Howells as the originator of the idea. Jonathan Sturges reported to Henry James something

Howells had told him in Paris:

> Oh, you are young, you are young--be glad of it: be glad of it and live. Live all you can: it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do--but live. This place makes it all come over me. I see it now. I haven't done so--and now I'm old. It's too late. It has gone past me--I've lost it. You have time. You are young. Live! (226)

In a letter to Howells quoted by the editors of the Notebooks, James explicitly credits Howells as the originator of the idea (228). Another notebook entry a few months later, dated July 13, 1896, at the Marine Hotel, Kingston, Ireland, reveals Henry James's concern with applying the idea to himself:

> I am in full possession of accumulated resources--I have only to use them, to insist, to persist, to do something more--to do much more--than I have done. The way to do it--to affirm one's self sur la fin--is to strike as many notes, deep, full and rapid, as one can. All life is--at my age, with all one's artistic soul the record of it--in one's pocket as it were. Go on, my boy, and strike hard; have a rich and long St. Martin's Summer. Try

> everything, do everything, render everything--be an artist, be distinguished, to the last. One has one's doubts and one's discouragements--but they are only so many essential vibrations of one's ideal. The field is still all round me, to be won; it blooms with the flowers that are still to be plucked. But enough of the general, these things are the ambient air; they are the breath of one's artistic and even of one's personal life. Strike, strike, again and again and again, at the special; I have only to live and to work, to look and to feel, to gather, to note. My cadres all there; continue, ah, continue, to fill them. (106)

That James had placed the idea in the mouths of his characters even before hearing of Howells's comments shows that the idea always appealed to him. In Watch and Ward (1871), we have a slightly modified version of the idea. When Roger declares to Hubert that "Nora...is the only thing in life I care for," the latter advises him: "live for yourself" (107). Three years later, in "Madame de Mauves," when Longmore expresses his admiration for the heroine, she responds with almost equal enthusiasm: "Go join your friend,--see everything, enjoy everything,

learn everything, and write me an excellent letter, brimming over with your impressions" (CT 3: 156). Earlier, before her marriage, her would-be mother-in-law had advised her: "Whatever befalls you, promise me one thing: to be yourself" (140). In The Wings of the Dove, the terminally ill Milly's doctor Sir Luke Strett advises her to take the trouble to live a little and even love a little.

Closely related to the idea of living life to the fullest and more related to James's treatment of suicide is the notion of the will to live and its opposite, the will to die or the more passive idea of losing the will to live. The will to live and the will to die, frequently dramatized by Henry James, are things he had had ample opportunity to observe at close quarters among members of his family. Several of the Jameses not only entertained suicidal thoughts, but even threatened suicide. For example, William James's biographer points out that Augustus James, the favored heir of William of Albany, threatened suicide when he became bankrupt as a result of unwise speculation (291-92). The senior Henry, who did not approve of his oldest son's interest in painting as a vocation, threatened suicide, "a threat that a dutiful son could not ignore" (F 103), despite the fact that "suicide was not proscribed by Henry's

theology." As early as 1849 he described suicide as a reasonable option for socially frustrated genius. "Both nature and society may prevent me following my genius, may keep it completely latent and undiscovered, by holding me in incessant bondage to themselves, but while God remains supreme they cannot make me actually resist it. Insanity or suicide would speedily decide that controversy in my favor" (Lectures: 50). When his daughter Alice threatened suicide in 1878, he said he was not opposed to the act if she felt it necessary (DAJ 149). When Henry offered condolences to his cousin Katharine Barber James after the suicide of her husband, Dr. William Prince, he derided conventional attitudes toward suicide (F 144).

Later on, William would use the term "self-murder" to refer to the road not taken in choosing a vocation (144). Like his art teacher William Morris Hunt, William also contemplated suicide in moments of despair, and "in choosing a vocation, found his way through illness toward the fulfillment of a failed parental ambition" (F 118). According to Feinstein, William James was "on the continual verge of suicide" during the winter of 1866-67 (207). When parental pressure about vocation became too intense, he fled to Europe "before his repressed rage could overwhelm him" (207). In retrospect, however,

William saw his life of leisure in Europe as aggravating depression and suicidal thoughts: "Although I cannot exactly say that I got low-spirited, yet thoughts of the pistol, the dagger and the bowl began to usurp an unduly large part of my attention, and I began to think that some change, even if a hazardous one, was necessary" (Letters 1: 95-96). In a letter to Tom Ward he clearly expresses suicidal thoughts when he writes: "I am poisoned with Utilitarian venom, and sometimes when I despair of ever doing anything, I say: 'Why not step out into the green darkness?'" (Perry 1: 287). A group of his drawings that reveal a preoccupation with violence also imply certain suicidal tendencies. According to Feinstein, "Considered as a group, the drawings are the products of a talented draftsman who was struggling against murderous wishes of mounting intensity. . . . William apparently feared impending disaster from some hidden source, perhaps his own destructive impulses" (F 128-131). Epigraphic commentary on these sketches that William later provided in his Principles of Psychology illuminates the sketches. Some of the comments have particular relevance in their applicability to Henry James's work. For example, the comments below "Charging Elephant" have relation to Henry's nightmare of the Louvre: "Strange men, and strange animals, either large

or small, excite fear, but especially men or animals advancing toward us in a threatening way" (124). Another notation reads: "We both fear, and wish to kill, anything that may kill us." Suicidal tendency could then be the result of a combination of the fear and the impulse to kill other tendencies that tend to destroy. Thus Hyacinth Robinson chooses to kill himself when something threatens to kill what is good in him. "The theme of the hunter who becomes the hunted anticipates the retribution that would ensue if the aggression that is directed outward in the drawings were turned against the artist himself. The emphasis on the head as both agent and target of attack implies an emphasis on intellectual, verbal modes of aggression" (131).

Like Henry James, Sr., and his first-born, his only daughter also had made threats of suicide. Alice's suicidal tendency is more overtly expressed in a diary entry written after Alice had read William's essay "The Hidden Self," over twenty years after her illness of 1867-68. Her rage, provoking her to a wish to commit murder or suicide, make her father or herself alternately the object of aggression. She writes:

> I saw so distinctly that it was a fight simply between my body and my will, a battle in which the former was to be triumphant to the end.

> Owing to some physical weakness, excess of nervous susceptibility, the moral power pauses, as it were for a moment, and refuses to maintain muscular sanity, worn out with the strain of its constabulary functions. (DAJ 149)

Alice continues:

> As I used to sit immovable reading in the library with waves of violent inclination suddenly invading my muscles taking some one of their myriad forms such as throwing myself out of the window, or knocking off the head of the benignant pater as he sat with his silver locks, writing at his table, it used to seem to me that the only difference between me and the insane was that I had not only all the horrors and suffering of insanity but the duties of doctor, nurse, and strait-jacket imposed upon me, too. (DAJ 149)

In the Freudian sense, since suicide is often a transposed desire for murder, either impulse here may be identified with suicide.

The long and productive lives of the more famous Jameses stand as the best testimony to the strong will to live among members of an illness-plagued family. The

senior Henry, despite a physical handicap, led a productive life and was influential in moulding the careers of his two famous sons. As Feinstein points out, during the Civil War and the decades immediately following it, an epidemic of invalidism attacked the surrounding areas of Boston (184). It became almost fashionable to be ill. The tendency among the Jameses to feel physically ill must have been nurtured by such a sense of fashionableness. Feinstein gives evidence of fashionable neurasthenic illness among the James brothers' Cambridge friends also (122). In the chapter on "The Use and Abuse of Illness" he elaborates on the desirability of illness. Men were believed to find sickness in women particularly attractive: a delicate woman was thought to be a desirable woman. Because invalidism justified leisure, "In a work-centered, pleasure-shunning culture, invalidism made idleness socially acceptable" (198). Henry James almost made a career of his back problems, a result of his "obscure hurt." His invalidism, "in addition to providing cover for his literary pursuits, created the illusion that he participated in the national struggle" (199). In addition to protecting leisure and making pleasurable travel socially acceptable, invalidism helped also to "convey feelings that would have been difficult to express directly without ruffling the

surface calm called for by the social ideal of the Victorian family" (200). Furthermore, "Not just a physical evil, illness was to be cultivated as a romantic sign of grace" (197). All this predilection toward illness in his immediate family and in the society around him must have influenced Henry James in creating a large number of physically unwell people in his fiction. That some of these resist their illnesses as long as they have reasons to live and die as soon as they lose their will to live would seem to follow from the importance of the will to the Jameses.

Biographical evidence shows that Henry James, Sr., lost his will to live when his wife died. Edel's view that, "strong, robust, manly, yet weak and feminine" he lived only by his wife (Life 1: 46), may be extreme. Yet he seemed incapable of going on without her: "he passed away or went out, with entire simplicity, promptness and ease, for the definite reason that his support had failed" (45). During his last illness, the senior Henry even took an active role in hastening his death by refusing food. Alice's letter to her brother Henry reporting their father's death shows how during his last hours he kept calling for "My Mary" (Life 1: 669).

> Although his physical strength had failed him, he had turned his sickroom into a place of joy.

> He announced that he had entered upon the "spiritual life" and thereafter refused all food. The doctors spoke of "softening of the brain," but all the evidence indicates that until his last hours he was in possession of his faculties (Life 1: 670).

Writing to William about their father's death, Henry reports that Aunt Kate "repeated again and again that father had 'yearned unspeakably' to die" (671).

By his own admission, the will to live was strong in Henry. He clearly expresses the idea in a letter to Antonio de Navarro. In response to Navarro's confession about idleness, Henry James observes similarities between their conditions in the "ease of expatriation." However, Navarro's financial independence spares him the necessity for "an imperative occupation" and in turn causes him "depressions and lassitudes." James considers himself fortunate because he is

> luckily possessed of a certain amount of corrective to our unnatural state, a certain amount of remedy, refuge, retreat, and anodyne! From the bottom of my heart I pity you for being without some practicable door for getting out of yourself. . . . It takes at the best, I think, a great deal of courage and patience

> to live--but one must do everything to invent, to force open, that door of exit from mere immersion in one's own states. (L 4: 372)

During one of his last illnesses, an oedema that was correctly diagnosed and successfully treated, Henry James wrote to his nephew Harry: "My vitality, my still sufficient cluster of vital 'assets,'. . . to say nothing of my will to live and to write, assert themselves in spite of everything" (Life 2: 751). His will to live is also reflected in the note to Edmund Gosse dictated from his deathbed early in 1916--"tell Gosse that my powers of recuperation are very great and that I'm making progress toward recovery without withdrawal" (Life 2: 814).

Despite suicidal depressions and suicidal thoughts and a subjection to illnesses bordering on hypochondria, the will to live among the Jameses was strong and overcame the negative impulse. The senior Henry's only daughter Alice and her cousin Minny, who succumbed to tuberculosis in her early twenties, represent two ends of the spectrum. If the inclination to die was strong in Alice James, the will to live was stronger in Minny Temple. Alice, subject to neurasthenic illness, fought a tendency to self-destruction all her life and died a natural death. An organic cause for her illness, cancer,

was diagnosed in her approximately a year before her death. Minny, diagnosed to be terminally ill in her prime, fought for life. If Alice overcame her persistent suicidal temptations, Minny overcame her occasional ones. Henry James projected Minny through two of his most famous heroines--Daisy Miller and Milly Theale--who lose their will to live under provoking circumstances. The delineation of these characters will be dealt with more fully in later chapters of this dissertation. Alice and Minny both felt strongly about Henry. He was her caretaker during Alice's last years. On her part, upon her father's death, Alice transferred her strong feelings for her father to her brother Henry (Life 1: 308). Since her hoped-for liberation from the family through marriage never came, "Alice's high spirits and her fund of energy could not be sufficiently discharged upon the world. In the end she discharged them upon herself" (Life 1: 308). Two nervous breakdowns, the first in 1868 at the age of twenty, and the second ten years later, took their toll on her. Hovering near death, Alice would alternate between a desire for the end and a desire to resist it. During her adolescent Newport days she had concluded that "The only thing which survives is the resistance we bring to life, and not the strain life brings us." As Edel comments, "Alice brought a full measure of resistance

that increasingly took the form of a struggle between body and mind" (DAJ 5). She even talked to her father of suicide. He gave her "his fatherly permission to 'end her life whenever she pleased,' exhorting her only to 'do it in a perfectly gentle way in order not to distress her friends'" (Life 1: 310). This was the senior Henry's way of making his daughter aware that the decision would be hers. Alice's response shows that her father's practice at amateur psychology worked. "Now she could perceive it to be her right to dispose of her own body when life had become intolerable, she could never do it; that when she felt tempted to it, it was with a view to break bonds, or to assert her freedom" (310). Once again, the will to live overcame the strong will to die in a James family member.

Alice's journal entry of the period of her stay in London reveals "an increasing mixture of self-pity and a mockery of death" (Life 2: 21). The farewell cable she sent William from her deathbed and the journal passage she dictated during the last few hours of her existence reveal her strength of will:

> I am being ground slowly on the grim grindstone of physical pain and on two nights I had almost asked for K's lethal dose, but one steps hesitantly along such unaccustomed ways and

> endures from second to second. I feel sure that it can't be possible but what the bewildered little hammer that keeps me going will very shortly see the decency of ending his distracted career. However this may be, physical pain, however great, ends in itself and falls away like dry husks from the mind, whilst moral discords and nervous horrors sear the soul. . . . Oh, the wonderful moment when I felt myself floated for the first time, into the deep sea of divine cessation, and saw all the dear old mysteries and miracles vanish into vapour. (DAJ 252)

According to Edel, "Alice wished for death, yet she died reluctantly. Her automatic breathing continued for seven hours with no look of pain on her face, only more and more the look of death" (Life 2: 33). As he asserts in the introduction to Alice James's Diary, "The claim of life against the claim of death--this is the assertion of every page of Alice's diary. Even when her strength failed her, she brought a resistance to death that was all the stronger for her having decided long before that she would not take her own life" (16-17).

The opposite of Alice in her will to live in the James family circle, Minny Temple would become the model

for two of Henry's most lovable heroines who will their own deaths. Leon Edel introduces Minny Temple at twenty as "the most radiant of his [Henry's] rediscovered Albany and New York cousins, 'a young and shining apparition,' slim, graceful, with a 'wonderful ethereal brightness of presence.' She was lithe and active, possessed of restlessness of body and mind and a 'splendid shifting sensibility'" (Life 1: 188).

In his autobiography, Henry James, meeting Minny at seventeen, goes into superlatives in describing her:

> If I have spoken of the elements and presences round about us that 'counted,' Mary Temple was to count, and in more lives than can now be named, to an extraordinary degree; . . . she was one of the first order, in the sense of the immediacy of the impression she produced, and produced altogether as by the play of her own light spontaneity and curiosity--. (282-83)

Henry praises his Albany cousins in general for their "naturalness" and goes on to label Minny as the "rarest, though at the same time symptomatically or ominously palest, flower of the stem" (283). After waxing eloquent upon her virtues, he comments: "She burned herself out; she died at twenty-four" (284).

Even Minny with her zest for life is given to

occasional suicidal thoughts. She wrote to John Gray, "I am sometimes tempted to take a drop of 'pison' to put me to sleep in earnest" (AUT 265). However, such thoughts do not last very long with Minny. After her doctor gives her his considered opinion of her condition and recommends a European trip, Minny expresses her determination to survive in a letter to John Gray:

> If I begin to be indifferent to the result I shall go down the hill quickly. I have enough Irish blood in me rather to enjoy a good fight.
>
> I feel the greatest longing for summer, or spring; I think I would like it to be always spring for the rest of my life. (AUT 266)

Ironically, on the day Minny died, Henry described to William in the present tense the absence of certain qualities in the women at Malvern by identifying their presence in Clover and Minny: "Clover Hooper has it--intellectual grace--Minny Temple has it--moral spontaneity" (L 1: 208). Ironically again, he associates one admirable quality with Clover Hooper, a friend of Minny's who would later commit suicide because of depression over her father's death. When Henry hears of Minny's death through a letter from his mother, he responds immediately, pouring out his emotions. Three days later, he writes to William, apotheosizing Minny

and offering her immortality in the tradition of the pastoral elegy. Minny can now be translated from reality into an image of the mind. He thinks of her as

> a steady unfaltering luminary in the mind rather than as a flickering wasting earth-stifled lamp....The more I think of her the more perfectly satisfied I am to have her translated from this changing realm of fact to the steady realm of thought. There she may bloom into a beauty more radiant than our dull eyes will avail to contemplate....I could shed tears of joy far more copious than any tears of sorrow when I think of her feverish earthly lot exchanged for this serene promotion into pure fellowship with our memories, thoughts and fancies. (L 1: 227)

In the letter to William, Henry describes what Minny had meant to him and observes a "reversal" in his relation with Minny: "I can't put away the thought that just as I am beginning life, she has ended it" (L 1: 228). Edel sees this aspect of their relationship dramatized in a story dealing with self-willed death long before James would recreate Minny in Milly Theale: "'Longstaff's Marriage' becomes highly autobiographical. Just as Minny

died as Henry recovered, Diana died when Reginald recovered and flourished" (Life 1: 273-74).

Almost a quarter of a century after Minny's death, Henry James would write in his notebooks the idea for a story:

> the little idea of the situation of some young creature (it seems to me preferably a woman, but of this I'm not sure), who, at 20, on the threshold of a life that has seemed boundless, is suddenly condemned to death (by consumption, heart-disease, or whatever) by the voice of the physician? She learns that she has but a short time to live, and she rebels, she is terrified, she cries out in her anguish, her tragic young despair. She is in love with life, her dreams of it have been immense, and she clings to it with passion, with supplication. 'I don't want to die--I won't, I won't, oh, let me live; oh, save me!' She is equally pathetic in her doom and in her horror of it. If she only could live just a little; just a little more--just a little longer. She is like a creature dragged shrieking to the guillotine--to the shambles. (169)

In an attempt at laying Minny's ghost by "wrapping it, a

particular occasion aiding, in the beauty and dignity of art" (AUT 544), James later developed these notes into the story of Milly Theale in The Wings of the Dove. Like Minny, Milly "would have given anything to live" (AUT 544). Fowler calls this a "commemorative novel" (87) and says,

> Just as Minny Temple seemed to James to have died 'from having served her purpose' of bringing strength and hope to him (L 1: 224), so her fictional sister, Milly Theale brings through her death a new kind of consciousness to Merton Densher. But just as James could distinguish the effect of Minny's death on him from those aspects of her personality that would have created difficulties for her had she lived, so too does he distinguish in his portrait of Milly Theale between her effect on those around her and those elements of her character that make life 'a sadly insoluble problem' for her. (87-88)

In the completed novel James leaves the mystery about the illness that would kill his heroine, "consumption, heart-disease, or whatever," unsolved, giving rise to unbridled speculation about her fatal illness.[1] For James's purposes, however, especially since Milly dies more

because she loses her will to live than because of her illness, the medical cause is irrelevant, just as the item manufactured by the Newsomes of Woollett, Massachusetts, is irrelevant to his purposes in The Ambassadors. Milly's physical ailment, like illness in general in nineteenth-century fiction, is only a metaphor. According to Susan Sontag, in the nineteenth century the earlier "notion that the disease fits the patient's character, as the punishment fits the sinner, was replaced by the notion that it expresses character. It is a product of will" (43). Sontag uses Schopenhauer's authority in support of her theory. According to Schopenhauer, the will exhibits itself as organized body, and the presence of disease signifies that the will itself is sick. Recovery from a disease depends on the healthy will assuming "dictatorial power in order to subsume the rebellious forces" of the sick will (43-44): "Disease is the will speaking through the body, a language for dramatizing the mental: a form of self-expression" (44). According to Sontag, in the nineteenth century there is a great reluctance to let anyone flunk the test of fatal illness, always considered a test of moral character: "the virtuous only become more so as they slide toward death. This is standard achievement for TB deaths in fiction....Even the ultra-

virtuous boost themselves to new moral heights" (41-42). Sontag points to Milly Theale as an example: "After learning that her suitor is a fortune hunter Milly Theale wills her fortune to him and dies" (42).

Another relationship with a woman that would have far-reaching effects on James's treatment of self-willed death is that with Constance Fenimore Woolson, called "Fenimore" by James. The devastating effects of Fenimore's suicide are reflected in several of James's works, including two with self-willed deaths--The Wings of the Dove and "A Round of Visits." Curiously enough, two works that preceded Fenimore's death--"Daisy Miller," a work that she greatly admired, and Roderick Hudson--prefigure elements that characterized Fenimore's self-destructive act. Roderick's fall or jump from the mountaintop parallels Fenimore's fall/jump from a high place. Herself an upper-class American woman in Europe, Miss Woolson had admired and identified herself with one of James's most famous heroines--Daisy Miller. She also felt that Daisy had been misunderstood and rejected by James's hero. Perhaps a result of ironic coincidence, Fenimore was buried almost in the very spot in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome where Daisy was laid to rest, "in an angle of the wall of Imperial Rome, beneath the cypresses and the thick spring-flowers" (Life 2: 80).

The idea for "A Round of Visits," another tale that developed from James's visit to Venice after Fenimore's death, was noted down in Venice in 1894: "that of a young man with some unspecified burden, who seeks someone to listen to him, that he may be eased. The young man has 'a secret, a worry, a misery, a burden, an oppression'. . . suggestive of the burden he himself carried, and of the young man's round of visits in which no one wants to share his misery. As the story developed, he would have someone else unload a burden on the already-burdened young man. "'He is healed by doing himself what he wanted to have done for him'" (158).

Edel sees not only Minny Temple, but also Constance Fenimore Woolson as entering into James's picture of Milly Theale:

> Minny Temple had died at the end of Henry James's 27th year, when he stood on the threshold of his literary life. Constance Fenimore Woolson had destroyed herself when he was in his 51st year, and a famous man. And now, . . . James found himself dreaming of a novel in which a young woman, all life before her, an heiress of the ages, is stricken and must die. In the year of Fenimore's death he returned to his memories of Minny. Early in

> November, shortly after writing "The Altar of the Dead," he set down his first notes for the large fiction that would become, almost a decade later, The Wings of the Dove (Life 2: 99). Fenimore's death in Venice became the death in Venice of The Wings of the Dove (100).

At the end of the novel,

> the image of the dead girl dominates the living, and changes the course of their lives. In The Wings of the Dove James incorporated the two women whose deaths he had faced at the beginning and at the end of the middle span of his life--Minny, the dancing flame, who had yielded everything and asked for nothing and whom he possessed eternally; and Fenimore, the deep and quiet and strong-willed, who had given devotion and had disturbed the innermost altar of his being (100).

As Edel points out later, the Venetian chapter brings together three major female influences in his life: "the long-ago death of Minny Temple, the wasting illness of his sister, and the violent end--in Venice--of Miss Woolson" (Life 2: 443).

James's complicated love-relationship with Minny Temple, the love and self-willed death of her fictional

counterpart in The Wings of the Dove and James's equally complicated relationship with Fenimore are directly related to a major theme in American fiction, what Leslie Fiedler calls "the failure of the American fictionist to deal with adult heterosexual love and his consequent obsession with death" (12). Though James repeatedly portrays heterosexual love in his fiction, successful male-female love relationship remains elusive in his fiction until The Golden Bowl. His obsession with death, particularly with self-willed death, constitutes an inalienable part of his suicide myth. According to Matthiessen, James hints obliquely at a linkage between his themes of love and death by allowing Milly to have a fainting spell at the very moment of her rare pleasure before the Bronzini (66-67). As early as "Daisy Miller," James identifies the immaculate virgin with the dying or dead girl of his fiction. The theme reaches its climax in The Wings of the Dove, the working title of which was La Mourante. "It is from the dead that James's truest, richest inspiration comes, from a fascination with and a love for the dead, for death itself; and it is no accident that his Muse and his America are both figured forth by the image of a girl who died at twenty-four" (Fiedler 303).

From the psychological point of view, the relation

between love interest and physical ailment, whether organic or imaginary, was noted by Freud in his essay "On Naricissism: An Introduction" (14: 73-102). As Freud points out, a person tormented by organic pain and discomfort gives up his interest in the things of the external world and withdraws libidinal interest from his love-objects (82). Since hypochondria manifests itself in distressing painful bodily sensations, that also affects libidinal interest (83). The lifelong concern of the Jameses, particularly of Henry, with illness, bordering on hypochondria, thus would relate his attitude toward sex to his physical condition and his delineation of love in his fiction. Freud is also inclined to class hypochondria with neurasthenia (83). "The realization of impotence, of one's own inability to love, in consequence of mental or physical disorder, has an exceedingly lowering effect upon self-regard" (98). While warning against overemphasis, Freud agrees that when a person with an active mental life recognizes an inferiority in one of his organs it acts as a spur and calls out a higher level of performance in him through over-compensation (99). "Loving, in itself, insofar as it involves longing and deprivation, lowers self-regard; whereas being loved, having one's love returned, and possessing the loved object, raises it once more" (99).

Insofar as the repressed is a part of the unconscious, Freud sees a relation between the unconscious and the process of repression ("The Unconscious" 166).

The connection between love and death takes on the added emphasis of the epiphany in James's suicide fiction. Jane P. Tompkins, emphasizing the central importance of a revelatory moment in James's tales, points to relation among epiphany, love and death. In a revelatory moment a character sees or has forced upon him a truth that changes his life. In this context, knowledge emerges as a crucially important concept in James's works. Even if knowledge causes death, not to have known would have been worse. Donadio expresses the same idea when he says, "in James's work failure to get the point that confronts one directly is often a matter of life and death" (127). Sudden revelations are responsible for the self-willed deaths of Daisy Miller, Morgan Moreen and Milly Theale. Tompkins compares Morgan Moreen to John Marcher, "whose life of vain imaginations left him too weak to withstand the shock of truth." Morgan, like Marcher, is intellectually sophisticated, but emotionally immature; however, because he is still a boy, he cannot be held responsible for his unwillingness to face his isolation. Failure to be loved causes premature aging in an adolescent boy (Martin, 16) and

provokes him to lose his will to live.

Henry James's love for Minny Temple stayed in the realm of the idealistic, while his love for Fenimore, despite suggestions of a liaison, seems to have remained mostly in the realm of friendship. Both women represent two aspects of self-willed death and become archetypal figures in James's fictional treatment of suicide.

Two other kinds of love that are archetypes in American literature--innocent homosexuality and unconsummated incest, the love of comrades and that of brother and sister, both narcissistic, are relevant to James's suicide myth. According to Leslie Fiedler, "Where woman is felt to be a feared and forbidden other, the only legitimate beloved is the self. Pure narcissism cannot, however, provide the dream and tension proper to a novel; the mirror-image of the self is translated in the American novel either into the flesh of one's flesh, the sister as anima; or into the comrade of one's own sex, the buddy as anima" (348). Biographers of the Jameses suggest unconsummated incest in their lives. Feinstein attributes Alice James's illness in the summer of 1878 to her brother William's choice of another Alice as mate (345): "She closed like a blossom chilled by a premature frost" (345). William went so far as to admit that his sister's invalidism "was a tie that could still

bind a married brother's affections" (345). Edel's comment on the effect of William's marriage on Henry is equally revelatory: "The marriage represented the first break in their primal relationship. A third person had stepped between them" (1: 584). The suggestive nature of Henry's congratulatory message indicates undercurrents of possible incestuous feeling. Henry refers to his absence at William's wedding as his "divorce" from him (Life 1: 584). Henry's preoccupation with the incest motif is clearly expressed in his maiden venture in the genre of the novel. Roger Lawrence's adoption of an orphaned young girl with the clear motive of moulding her into his wife makes incest the pervasive theme of Watch and Ward. Roger makes no improper advances to Nora, and the girl is completely unaware of Roger's ulterior motive. However, when she becomes aware of his intentions, after the initial shock, she accepts him. James carries the theme of incest also into "The Modern Warning," in which the strong attachment between a brother and a sister creates conflict in the sister's marriage. Agatha, Lady Chasemore, Sir Rufus' American wife, feels that in marrying someone of whom her brother did not approve, she betrayed her brother. After things are patched up between the two, the brother, Macarthy Grice, decides to visit the Chasemores in England. Suddenly, rather than

face her brother, Agatha panics and takes her own life. Although she has a happy married life, the strong bond with her brother forces Agatha to perform this unnatural act.

In his most recent one-volume biography of Henry James, Edel refers to "the deeper realm of homoerotic feeling that Henry must have had for his brother William and which William sensed and feared" (82). Richard Hall calls Henry's love for William "the central emotional experience" of his life and argues that this had been suppressed in their adolescence and so frustrated "the adult realization of his passions." Hall argues that Henry James's emotions might be called "incestuous" rather than "homosexual." Edel, however, considers the homoerotic motif in certain of James's novels--the relationships between Rowland and Roderick, Newman and Valentin, Muniment and Hyacinth, more brotherly than "gay" (FN, 723).

Two other relationships in personal life have given rise to speculations of homosexual attachments for Henry--those with the young sculptor Hendrik Andersen and the young Irishman Jocellyn Persse. Both were attachments formed in Henry's old age. According to Edel, from the beginning James treated Andersen as if he were his alter ego. In addition to having the same first

name and the same month for birthday, they were both second sons with talented older brothers. Also, a strong element of megalomania in the sculptor paralleled the novelist's Napoleonic drive (Life 575). In his old age, Henry felt a revival of his youth in Hendrik--"The old Henry and the young--it was as if Andersen had been fashioned out of James's old memories and old passions" (495). If Hendrik saw a patron in the novelist, the latter saw a revival of his youth in the sculptor. Except for the difference in age, the patron/protegée relationship here parallels the Rowland/Roderick one in Roderick Hudson. Though the number of actual meetings between the two Henrys was limited, the correspondence between the two is revealing. Edel takes particular note of the quantity of physical, tactile language James used in his letters to Hendrik. Writing to Andersen in 1902 upon the death of his elder brother, James invites him to "lean on me as on a brother and a lover" (Life 497). In the absence of letters from Andersen to James, we do not have conclusive proof of a homosexual relationship. However, Edel concludes: "Andersen...inspired feelings in Henry James akin to love--to a love such as Fenimore had had for him. She had written of her loneliness and complained of the years that passed between their meetings as James now wrote to Andersen" (498).

Another aspect of his personal life, important to James's treatment of suicide and carried into his works, is the absence of traditional, institutionalized religion. Since lack of community is the major cause of suicides and since studies by sociologists and psychologists show that suicide rates in the nineteenth century were lowest among Catholics and Jews (two religious groups with the strongest sense of community), absence of traditional religion in James's life and fiction becomes significant. Henry grew up in an atmosphere of religious freedom. In A Small Boy and Others, Henry describes how as a young boy unable to answer the question of "What church do you go to?" and perturbed by their "powerless state," which he equated with a "houseless or a cookless" state, he broached the question to his father. The senior Henry's reply that "we could plead nothing less than the whole privilege of Christendom and that there was no communion, even that of Catholics, even that of the Jews, even that of the Swedenborgians, from which we need find ourselves excluded" (133-34) did not satisfy the son.

The extremely individualistic Jameses, for generations, had tried to formulate their individual brands of religion. In William of Albany the concern with religion took the form of an obsession with money and the

evils it can produce. Hartley Grattan describes him thus: "Everything known about him can be summed up under three headings: he was acquisitive, pious and sternly moral" (2). In describing his son Henry, Grattan would change "moral" to "intellectual." The senior Henry, revolting from the barrenness of his father's conventional Presbyterian dogmas and searching for his own brand of religion, arrives at a kind of Swedenborgianism (3). The "intellectual" Henry's preoccupation with religion continues in his two intellectual sons, William and Henry. Grattan notices a "continuity of mind" between Henry, Sr., and his son William, both of whom dealt with ultimate problems and underwent a similar psychological experience in young manhood which influenced the way in which they solved their problems. They both experienced shattering visions of horror that led them to mental breakdowns. The road to recovery for the father lay through his personal brand of Swedenborgianism, while for the son it lay through philosophy and Renouvier's definition of Free Will. In The Varieties of Religious Experience, published in 1902, one of the classics of modern religious thought, he "posited his religion on an individualistic base. Religion was, when it was alive, a personal matter based upon experience. He was opposed to all orthodoxies and

had small interest in theological subtleties" (171). Donadio succinctly expresses the difference in religious attitude between Henry, Sr., and his son William when he says that the basis of the former's faith was the losing of the individual self in the selfhood of God, while the latter found it necessary to assert his selfhood to survive (14). Henry, according to Grattan, was different from his father and his brother in his psychological development and his interests. Like them, he was concerned with "problems" and he treated them psychologically. "And since nothing in his life led him to a concern with ultimates, he was able to concentrate and narrow his interests in a strikingly unique fashion. He descended from the heavens to the earth and to that small part of the earth inhabited by people of wealth and fashion. He became the supreme analyst of the leisure class under the capitalistic regime" (Grattan 5). Lacking the support of either theology or philosophy, Henry James formed his own sense of an aesthetic religion. What Matthiessen calls "his uprooted religious sense which had been deprived in childhood of any normal development" must have contributed to this (144). Lacking the support of traditional religion himself, Henry James, Jr., is unable to provide it for his characters. In moments of crisis, especially when close

to death, characters' reflections fail to include religious thoughts. Matthiessen, writing about the long passage of Milly's meditation in the park, points to the absence of any "apparent awareness by James of its full religious implications" (MP, 64). When his characters visit churches, it is either for aesthetic reasons or for undisturbed contemplation. Christopher Newman's softening toward the Bellegardes and his decision to "let the Bellegardes go" takes place in Notre Dame Cathedral. However, as Goldsmith points out, it is not a religious act, but one of will; it is not prompted by Christian ethics, but by "magnanimity" (121). Claire de Cintré joins a convent, not because of religious reasons, but to get even with her family. The admirable exercise of free will by Longmore, Christopher Newman and Milly Theale demonstrates their moral superiority.

In the process of creating his aesthetic religion, Henry, Jr., considered moral qualities supremely important in any author of consequence. To him morality in writing was an intellectual quality rooted in a man's philosophical view of the world. In a work like The Wings of the Dove, Stephen Spender identifies three different strands of "morality": on the surface, the pattern of social life, the world of appearances and money; above this, constantly thrown up from it, the

fantastic psychological imagery of the desires and frustrated wishes; below these two, the plot (destiny), the thread beyond their control, which in The Wings of the Dove leads to the death of Milly and to the frustration of Kate and Densher's happiness. Destiny in James's works is closely related to the decadence of the people he is describing, which makes them victims of their environment (58-59). The incapacity of many of his characters for living an admirable life without a great deal of money illustrates this. Different from his father, "a thoroughgoing supernaturalist," and his brother, concerned with man's relation to the universe and to God, Henry, Jr., "focussed his interest on man's relation to man. He took over his father's social interests...but removed the religious overtones and redefined the whole matter on a lower plane" (361).

Henry James's statements of a religious position are contained in an 1883 letter to Grace Norton on the occasion of a death in her family and in a 1910 article contributed to Harper's Bazaar in which he stated his belief, or rather his fervent hope, that human consciousness may continue after death. To Grace Norton he wrote:

> I am determined not to speak to you, except with the voice of stoicism. I don't know why

> we live--the gift of life comes to us from I don't know what source or for what purpose: but I believe we can go on living for the reason that (always of course up to a certain point) life is the most valuable thing we know anything about and it is therefore presumptively a great mistake to surrender it while there is any yet left in the cup. In other words consciousness is an illimitable power, and though at times it may seem to be all consciousness of misery, yet in the way it propagates itself from wave to wave, so that we never cease to feel, though at moments we appear to, try to, pray to, there is something that holds one in one's place, makes it a standpoint in the universe which it is probably good not to forsake. (L 2: 424)

James repeats his emphasis on consciousness in his late-life essay, "Is There a Life After Death?" James appears to believe that physical life does not continue after death. "The question is of the <u>personal</u> experience, of course, of another existence; of its being I my very self, and you, definitely, and he and she who resume and go on, and not of unthinkable substitutes or metamorphoses" (604). He points to the fact that

"science takes no account of the soul, the principle we worry about, and that as however nobly thinking and feeling creatures, we are abjectly and inveterately shut up in our material organs" (604). Continuing in the same vein, about the artist, he adds that the artist's need to be is "the intense desire of being to get itself personally shared, to show itself for personally sharable, and thus foster the sublimest faith" (611). With his extreme individualism, James appears to contend that only products of the creative consciousness survive physical death. In other words, immortality for an artist resides in his works. In the concluding paragraph of the essay, talking of the "independence" of his individual soul, he distinguishes "desire" from "belief" a term he had not used in the essay and says that "there is one light under which they come to the same thing . . . . If one acts from desire quite as one would from belief, it signifies little what one name one gives motive" (614). He expects to cultivate his "hopeful sense of the auspicious" with such intensity as to give himself "the splendid illusion of doing something [him]self for [his] prospect, or at all events for [his] own possibility, of immortality." He concludes the essay with the emphatic "I reach beyond the laboratory-brain" (614). Naturally, with such individualism that precludes

traditional religion from his life, James denies such succour to his characters. To those with inclinations toward self-destruction, the absence of the influence of traditional religion enhances the power of will in taking life and death decisions.

Cesare Pavese's comments on suicide reflect the close relationship between autobiography, art and suicide:

> To express an inward tragedy in an art form, and so purge himself of it, is something that can only be achieved by an artist who, even while living through his tragedy, was already putting forth sensitive feelers and weaving his delicate threads of construction; who, in short, was already incubating his creative ideas. There can be no such thing as living through the storm in a state of frenzy and then liberating pent-up emotions in a work of art as an alternative to suicide. How true that is can be seen from the fact that artists who really have killed themselves because of some tragedy that happened to them are usually trivial songsters, lovers of sensation, who never, in their lyrical effusions, even hint at the deep cancer that is gnawing them. From which one learns that the only way to escape

> from the abyss is to look at it, measure it, sound its depths and go down into it. (AA 140)

James's conscious as well as unconscious drawing upon his own experiences and those of his family, particularly their interest in free will, their extreme individualism that led to their formulation of personal religions and the Romantic fascination with suicide dealt with in the previous chapter, all contribute to his fictional delineation of suicides. An important element of his life, his travels abroad, infuses his writing in general and wins him recognition as the promulgator of the international theme in American fiction. Since most of his self-destructive characters are involved in international situations, and since the international experience constitutes an important part of James's own life and the lives of his self-destructive characters, I shall deal with this in greater detail in the following chapter.

Note

[1]The most accepted theories view Milly as suffering from either consumption (the illness that killed Minny Temple) or cancer (the illness that killed Alice James). In addition to these theories, as Susan Sontag points out, the peculiarly modern predilection for psychological explanations of disease leads to formulations like Menninger's: "Illness is in part what the world has done to a victim, but in a larger part it is what the victim has done with his world, and with himself." Such a notion places the onus of the disease on the patient and directs the patient away from medical treatment. Furthermore, "cure is thought to depend principally on the patient's already sorely tested or enfeebled capacity for self-love" (46-47). Consumption, most popularly accepted as Milly's disease, probably because that was what consumed Minny Temple, has had certain romantic associations in literature. Terms associated with the disease are often associated with passion. Many of the literary and erotic attitudes known as "romantic agony" derive from tuberculosis and its transformation through metaphor (Sontag 29). Sir Luke's advice to Milly to have

a love affair is in keeping with the nineteenth-century prescription of sex as therapy for tuberculosis. Milly's death is further associated with typical nineteenth-century accounting of TB through the feature of resignation as both the cause and the result of the disease. Milly's turning her face to the wall is the ultimate symbol of her resignation during a period when "TB was represented as the prototypical passive death. Often it was a kind of suicide" (22-24). Another traditional association with TB--melancholy, the artist's disease, associated with the sensitive, creative, superior being--would appear to rule it out as Milly's disease since melancholy is not part of her aspect. Mercer and Wangensteen, in a more recent study based on medical data, argue that Milly's illness is neither consumption nor cancer, but the more romantic Chlorosis or anaemia.

Chapter 4

Displacement

The journeys abroad, undertaken by Jamesian characters in search of health, pleasure, culture, etc., result in personal, social and cultural displacement for them. The inability of the displaced characters to function integrally in their new environments produces a sense of alienation. Since sociologists and psychologists view alienation as the prime cause of suicides, and since most of the suicides (both physical and figurative) in James's fiction take place in his "international" tales and novels, displacement in terms of country might be viewed as a prime cause of self-willed deaths in such works. Often, an accompanying sense of displacement in terms of culture, society and family intensifies such a sense of isolation. Cultural displacement, the major cause of suicide in the case of Roderick Hudson, combined with other contributary and resultant elements, produces self-destructive tendencies in characters in "Madame de Mauves," The Princess Casamassima, "The Modern Warning," The American, "Daisy Miller" and The Wings of the Dove. In "Madame de Mauves," The convent-educated, wealthy American Euphemia Cleve, transplanted socially and culturally by marriage

into a French aristocratic family, experiences cultural and moral shock. Her inability to adapt to European values and her adamant holding on to Puritan morality provoke her husband to kill himself. In "The Modern Warning," when Agatha Grice, who is from a wealthy and intensely patriotic American family, becomes Lady Chasemore by marriage, she experiences displacement in family, society and country. When displaced, the morally upright Christopher Newman, a self-made rich American, who goes to Europe in search of cultural enrichment and a wife, manages to keep himself intact. However, his influence arouses death wishes in a brother and sister, who, until their encounter with him, were well-rooted in an impoverished, ancient, titled European family. When transplanted to Europe, Daisy Miller, James's archetypal innocent American female, is disheartened by the cruelty of her Europeanized compatriots. The fatally ill Milly Theale, a rarefied Daisy Miller, full of zest for life, loses her will to live and succumbs to the force of moral shock in the face of betrayal by close British friends.

Since the international element constitutes a major aspect of displacement in the works under study here, the greatest emphasis in this chapter will be on James's handling of the international theme. After identifying the well-known elements of James's internationalism,

especially its roots in the life of the James family, I shall relate them to his delineation of self-willed deaths in the works mentioned. For purposes of this study, Oscar Cargill's definition of an international novel is most appropriate. Cargill defines an international novel as

> one in which a character, usually guided in his actions by the mores of one environment, is set down in another, where his learned reflexes are of no use to him, where he must employ all his individual resources to meet successive situations, and where he must intelligently accommodate himself to the new mores, or, in one way or another, be destroyed. It is . . . a device for the revelation of character. (PMLA 73: 419)

Dorothea Krook calls James's international theme one of the principal "objective correlatives" for his experience of the condition of modern man (198). Virginia Fowler echoes the sentiment with broader implications when she says: "In his particular vision of Americans as childlike, unaware human beings, coming to Europe to learn something of 'life,' James came upon the perfect metaphor for the most basic of human situations" (33). To the average reader, perhaps this particular theme is

synonymous with the author's name. Undoubtedly, next to his technique of probing the consciousness, the international theme is the most important element of his fiction. Though writers like Hawthorne and Cooper before him had used this, Henry James is clearly responsible for raising the international theme to mythic proportions in American literature. Without exception, his greatest novels treat of the conflict of cultures and of individuals caught in between. Among the works dealing with physical suicide, all except "Osborne's Revenge" and "A Round of Visits" contain the theme. Its importance to James's treatment of suicides is underscored by the fact that all but two of the tales dealing with physical suicide and two of the tales dealing with symbolic suicide have an international atmosphere. In many cases, conflict between the old world and the new aggravates suicidal tendencies.

The novelist's interest in Europe was carefully cultivated at home. From a young age, Henry James was conditioned to believe in the cultural superiority of Europe. His father would account for the itinerant life in Europe which he imposed upon his family as being in the educational interests of his children. According to F. W. Dupee,

> rich, intelligent and comparatively free, the

> Jameses belonged to what he [Henry James] once called 'the classic years of the great Americano-European legend.' They were pioneers in the American rediscovery of Europe, the enjoyment of art, the cultivation of the self, the spiritualization of values in this country. (AUT viii)

Revisiting America after a six-year absence, Henry James would find himself in the undesirable position of having to choose between America and Europe. He records in his Notebooks: "No European writer is called upon to assume that terrible burden, and it seems hard that I should be. The burden is necessarily greater for an American--for he must deal, more or less, even if only by implication, with Europe; whereas no European is obliged to deal in the least with America. No one dreams of calling him less complete for doing so" (24). Even though James finds this peculiar demand on the American writer challenging, some of his significant recollected impressions relate to his own international experiences. Italy makes the strongest impression on Henry. In his autobiography, he would comment, with a sense of elation and shades of envy, about his youngest brother Bob's early introduction to Italy:

> He took in the picture of Italy, with his firm

> hard gift, having the chance while William and I were still, comparatively, small untouched and gaping barbarians; and it should always be in him to do at some odd fine moment a certain honour to that . . . he had been dipped as a boy into the sacred stream; to some effect which, thanks to two or three of his most saving and often so amusing sensibilities, the turbid sea of his life might never quite wash away. (261)

Despite such strong, positive sentiments toward Italy, he would make the country the venue of the tragic deaths of Daisy Miller and Milly Theale. As is suggested by his choice of a permanent home abroad, England would also have great appeal for him. His particular interest in England was carefully nurtured by his father. As Henry claims in his autobiography,

> All our books in that age were English . . . and I take the perception of that quality in them to have associated itself with more fond dreams and glimmering pictures than any other one principle of growth. It was all a result of the deeply <u>infected</u> state: I had been prematurely poisoned-- . . . The Bookstore, the fondest of my father's resorts, . . . was

> overwhelmingly and irresistibly English, as not less tonically English was our principal host there . . . . (48)

Henry James's interest in Europe, related to his interest in the past and carefully cultivated by his parents from an early age (AUT 50), leads to equally strong feelings for America and Europe reflected in his ambivalence toward the two countries and the associations with them. Leon Edel, writing about Henry James's retrospective view of his formative Newport years, points out that Henry James had been an "outsider" in America:

> He could not be a part of an American society 'where the great black ebony God of business was the only one recognized'. He had known only the other gods; the gods of art, of culture, of educated talk, the life of the spirit. . . . For him Newport represented 'disconnection' not only from Europe but from America itself. (Life 1: 118)

Henry had told William that when he returned from Europe in May, 1870, he felt, as he did after subsequent returns, "that the only way to live in America was to turn one's back on Europe; that the attempt to mix them is terribly comfortless business" (Life 1: 287). As Edel points out,

during his Cambridge years, Henry James had "ample leisure in which to ponder his own ambiguous state. He could look at Europe with American eyes, and he knew that he looked at America often as if he were a European" (Life 1: 295). To James, "cosmopolitanism was a civilized state of being; yet it was hardly the ideal state. The ideal, James believed, 'should be a concentrated patriot'" (Life 1: 295). The sense of guilt implied in not being "a concentrated patriot" must have inspired James to create a specimen of that admirable quality in Macarthy Grice of "The Modern Warning," whose patriotism, verging on prejudice, evokes too strong a sense of guilt in his sister who marries a British nobleman. Remaining in the United States after his mother's death, James wrote to William J. Hoppin in London: "My country pleases, in many ways, but it doesn't satisfy, and I sometimes wrap my head in my toga, to stifle (stoically) my groans" (Life 1: 657).

Such ambivalence must account for opposing results of an international experience in individual characters. Europe provides an enriching experience for a character like Lambert Strether of The Ambassadors while it contributes to the destruction of characters like Roderick Hudson, Daisy Miller and Milly Theale. None of James's Europeans in America commit suicide, while

several of his Americans in Europe end up destroying themselves. This need not necessarily mean that James's bias leans overwhelmingly toward the destructiveness of Europe. Americans like Euphemia Cleve and Christopher Newman lead culturally superior Europeans to destroy themselves. In view of such ambivalence, William James's assessment of his brother as "a native of the James family" who "has no other country" (AUT ix) is perhaps accurate. Dupee, in his introduction to James's Autobiography, echoes the sentiment when he says, "A bachelor with no immediate family of his own to command his affections and mark the passage of time, he continued to live intensely in his own and the family's past" (viii). Perhaps, as Edel points out,

> Henry James came to see himself in the ironic light of the story of Eden. America was his lost paradise and his had been the 'fortunate fall.' 'Very special and very interesting,' he was to write, 'to catch in the fact the state of being of the American who has bitten deep into the apple of 'Europe' and then been obliged to take his lips from the fruit.' (Life 1: 296)

Two related acts near the end of his life show that James's essential ambivalence toward America and Europe

was to continue till the time of his death. A month after opting British citizenship he added a codicil to his will instructing that if he died in England, his body should be cremated and his ashes laid near the graves of his family in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, cemetery (Grattan 356).

In the preface to Volume XIV of the New York edition, James explains his interest in creating "international" stories. Acknowledging that the subjects of The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl in each case could have been perfectly expressed "had all the persons concerned been only American or only English or only Roman or whatever" (P 1209), he proceeds to add that he resorts to "the greater extravagance" of the international, simply because it is "the course of the greater amusement." He goes on to point out that "one never really chooses one's general range of vision--the experience from which ideas and themes and suggestions spring" (P 1210). The profitable thing is to "have" your experience, to recognize it and to understand it: "The artist . . . has but to have his honest sense of life to find it fed at every pore even as the birds of the air are fed" (P 1211). It therefore stands to reason that James's life, rich in international experience, is what prompts him to dramatize the theme. In the preface to

Roderick Hudson, which he labels his "first attempt at a novel, a long fiction with a 'complicated' subject" (1040), James insists that his intention in extending its serial publication was prolonging "from month to month, the illusion of the golden air" of the Black Forest where it was partly written. Looking at the novel years later, he realizes that the novel does not convey the impression; "yet half the actual interest lurks for me in the earnest, baffled intention of making it felt" (1041-42). He recalls the "felt pleasure" during the winter spent in New York, "of trying, on the other side of the world, still to surround with the appropriate local glow the characters that had combined, to my vision, the previous year in Florence" (1042). He makes clear that his intention in setting the opening chapter in Northampton, Massachusetts, was to set up a contrast. Though he regrets giving an actual, existing name to the town, his intention was to provide only a type and one of the terms of his plan was "the projection, for [his] fable, at the outset, of some more or less vivid antithesis to a state of civilisation providing for art" (1043). He was impressed by "the mixture of manners" (1211). He looked for a "social fusion," but did not see it materialize: "Behind all the small comedies and tragedies of the international, in a word, has

exquisitely lurked for me the idea of some eventual sublime consensus of the educated" (1212). Insofar as no perfect integration takes place in his novels and tales of internationalism, James's ambition of effecting a "social fusion" remains an unaccomplished goal. In fact, in the works dealing with suicide, the opposite of fusion takes place. This must have elicited James's admission later in the preface that "social incoherence (with the sense of its opposite practically extinct among the nations) has at last got itself accepted, right and left, as normal" (1216). This is even more so in cases where marriages have taken place. As James points out, the international relation was initially portrayed in literature as one of intermarrying, always in the same way:

> The European of 'position' married the young American woman, or the young American woman married the European of position. . . . No American citizen appeared to offer his hand to the 'European' girl, or if he did so offered it in vain. The bridal migrations were eastward without exception--as rigidly as if settled by statute. . . . It all redounded to the honour and glory of the young woman grown in American conditions--to cast discredit on whose general

> peerlessness by attested preference for other types could but strike the domestic aspirant as an act of disloyalty or treachery. (1213)

I shall analyze James's own treatment of the international marriages involving suicides later in this chapter, in conjunction with his Americans in Europe.

In his preface to Volume XIII of the New York edition, James says how "the 'international' light lay thick" on the general scene of his observation, and how "the comparative state of innocence of the spirit" of his countryfolk received much of the illumination. Though James's America is often the idealized myth popularized by R. W. B. Lewis as Adamic, he is also aware of the American's negative qualities. James views "the most general appearance of the American (of those days) in Europe, that of being almost incredibly unaware of life--as the European order expressed life--" as the commonest drawback of the American in Europe (P 1197-98). In the works dealing with suicide, the most blatant example of such an incognizance can be seen in "Madame de Mauves," where, in spite of her romanticism, the completely innocent Euphemia is ignorant of life in the European sense when she eagerly accepts the Baron's proposal of marriage. Christopher Newman and Roderick Hudson further illustrate such naivete. This unawareness is quite

understandable, since in James's view the American men, much more than the women, were unprepared for the European way of life (P 1199). In the cases of Euphemia and Newman, the two Americans survive the assault of life, whereas the Europeans they come in closest contact with destroy themselves, either literally or figuratively. Confronted with her inflexible virtue, Euphemia's husband kills himself. Unable to choose between Christopher Newman and her family, a confused Claire de Cintré, by joining a convent, wills herself out of active participation in life. For Roderick Hudson, the promising young American sculptor suddenly launched into the aesthetically rich European world, the results of the encounter are suicidal. Stephen Spender, in "The School of Experience in the Early Novels," attributes this to a peculiar kind of isolation, "the isolation of a person who is so deeply involved in experiencing the sensations of a world that is foreign to him that he fails strikingly to affirm himself as a part of its unity" (67-68). Simultaneous exposure to the rich complexity of European art, history and manners on one side and its evil on the other destroys Roderick Hudson.

Despite such pronounced ambivalence, James sees limitless possibilities for the international theme and in his Notebooks refers to it as an "inexhaustible mine"

(77). However, he feels the need to exercise caution in the use of suicides in his fiction. When Paul Bourget reported the case of a beautiful young friend who jumped out of a hotel window in Milan because she discovered her mother's infidelities, James could see ways of using the idea in an international story; with some minor changes he used it for "A London Life." However, as he claims in his notebooks, he did not want to use the suicide, because "It's too rare," and he had already used it "the other day in 'Two Countries'" (79), which was rechristened "The Modern Warning."

"The Modern Warning," like Watch and Ward excluded from the New York edition, perhaps offers the best example of an international situation, specifically an international marriage, leading to a suicide. Even the notebook entry of July 9, 1884, clearly states an international conflict and indicates a possible suicide. The idea was suggested to James by the reading of Sir Lepel Griffin's book about America, The Great Republic. The story is titled after a book that is the bone of contention between the two major characters.

> Type of the conservative, fastidious, exclusive Englishman (in public life, clever, etc.), who hates the U.S.A. and thinks them a contamination to England, a source of funeste

warning, etc., and an odious country socially. He falls in love with an American Girl and she with him--this of course to be made natural if possible. He lets her know, frankly, that he loathes her country as much as he adores her personally, and he begs her to marry him. She is patriotic in a high degree--a genuine little American--and she has the sentiment of her native land. But she is in love with the Englishman, and though she resists on patriotic grounds she yields at last, accepts him and marries him. She must have a near relation--a brother, say--who is violently American, an anglophobiste (in public life in the U. S. A.); and of whom she is very fond. He deplores her marriage, entreats her to keep out of it, etc. He and the Englishman loathe each other. After the marriage the Englishman's hostility to the U.S. increases, fostered by the invasion of Americans, etc. State of mind of the wife. Depression, melancholy, remorse and shame at having married an enemy of her country. Suicide? There is a certain interest in the situation--the difficulty of choice and resignation on her part--the resentment of a

rupture with the brother, etc. (65-66)

In the completed story, James almost accurately follows the ideas set forth in the notebook entry, especially in regard to the antagonism of the brother and the suggested suicide of the sister. However, James refrains from showing the "depression, melancholy, remorse and shame at having married an enemy of her country" in the girl. In fact, she appears to be happy and reconciled with her brother's gesture in visiting them. A passage, paralleling the chapter describing Isabel Archer's vigil after her recognition, probing Lady Chasemore's consciousness would have illuminated her mental state. Since James does not probe Agatha's consciousness in this regard, and if actions speak louder than words, Agatha's unexpected suicide prior to her brother's arrival speaks volumes for her anguish.

One of the main salutary attractions of Europe to the nineteenth-century American was its curative nature for the physically unwell. The American in search of cure had the attractions of a change of scenery and the spas; most importantly, unlike in America, where illness protected leisure, leisure was not "under suspicion in Europe" (F 199). Biographers of William and Henry detail how they both played the politics of health to gain access to limited family funds for European travel.

Henry James's faith in Europe for improving the well and the unwell is illustrated in his encouraging his friend John La Farge to visit Europe when he became ill. He gives La Farge some pointers on how to persuade his wife: "Give her my love and tell her, persuasively, that if Europe does not wholly solve the problems of existence, it at least helps the flight of time--or beguiles its duration" (L 1: 121). Later, James would send the most legendary of his heroines, Milly Theale, to Europe in search of improved health that might result from a change of scenery. The mark of death from an unnamed illness sets her apart from the other Jamesian international heroines. Nevertheless, her determination to live is obvious. Observing Milly, precariously perched on a short promontory, Susan Stringham quickly dispels her own fears about possible suicidal thoughts on Milly's part. With epiphanic force, she realizes that far from meditating a jump, Milly was "looking down on the kingdoms of the earth" (19: 124). The implied answer to the question Mrs. Stringham raises here underscores Milly's will to live. Literally and figuratively on top of the world, her capacity not just for <u>living</u> but even for <u>ruling</u> the world comes through in this passage. The many references to Milly as a "princess" would also highlight this attitude. But confronted with European

treachery, such vitality and zest for life soon experience a reversal.

In delineating the Europeans, James exposes "the decadence of the old European aristocracies, with their ferocious pride of race, their fanatical adherence to traditional forms and their ripe Old World sophistication issuing in the more insidious varieties of moral corruption" (Krook 8). Along with the decadence, James also shows the beauty and the grace that coexist with the corruption in a really old society and demonstrates "what a fatal fascination these can have for a susceptible young mind, especially if the mind happens to be American" (Krook 8).

In order to understand the often destructive outcomes of the encounters between Europeans and Americans in James's works, it is necessary to understand fully his Americans in Europe. They may be categorized into groups including the following: the settled people like Mr. Touchett of The Portrait of a Lady and Adam Verver of The Golden Bowl who are wealthy and need not be concerned with making a living; the transient population, mostly women and children, whose menfolk are too busy at home in America making the money to send their families to Europe; the acquisitive kind like Christopher Newman who want to appropriate the best that money can buy and

also absorb culture; the artistic kind like Roderick Hudson and Henry James himself who find the native American soil not fertile enough for nurturing their artistic temperaments; families like the Moreens, leading an itinerant life without benefit of money, trying to keep up the appearance of wealth.

James's Americans "are almost always rich, often exceedingly rich" (Krook 8). This gives them a freedom from that want experienced by impoverished Europeans and a matching freedom from conventional forms. Thus equipped with "a freshness and a vitality in their approach to life, an absence of inhibitions . . . and a lack of sophistication" the American innocent goes abroad. Such an American, when crude and provincial, as Americans often are in James, makes the Europeans shudder with distaste. Christopher Newman, in spite of his magnanimity, is suspiciously viewed by the Bellegardes, because of his mercantile mentality and lack of the social graces associated with rank and birth. When American innocence is fresh, charming and 'original,' Europeans find it, "at least at the start, fascinating, amusing and even delightful"; Isabel Archer, Milly Theale and Maggie Verver exemplify this condition.

> But almost always (alas) what the Europeans at the start find engaging and fascinating in the

> American national character they find in the end desperately irritating and intolerably boring; and it is out of this interaction of the American mind with the European that James's grand theme is born. (Krook 9)

The result of an encounter between these two at close quarters, especially when "intimately entangled by love or marriage" as Krook points out, more often than not reveals a tragic aspect (10). Thus the international encounter is intimately related to suicide in Henry James's fiction.

Even James's early international fictions do more than contrast characters of different national origins; he explores the relationship between individuals and their cultural backgrounds. Major characters make some effort to understand and evaluate their formative influences and even effect changes in themselves. Americans like Roderick Hudson and Frederick Winterbourne who change too fast from their native American influences lose stability and moral judgment (Ward, Form 77).

Stephen Donadio notes the distinction James makes between the cultures of Europe and America. "In James's terms, culture for the European consists in bringing oneself into a proper relation to the accumulations (both material and spiritual) of the past" (18-19). For the

American, it consists essentially in the cultivation of the self, the creation and 'rendering' of personality as a work of art:

> Culture therefore becomes an absorbing form of activity for the American, while for the European it suggests nothing so much as a passive relation--a veritable bondage--to the past, and this distinction probably has a great deal to do with why, in James's 'international relation,' it is usually the Americans who gain the upper hand--at least from a moral point of view. The European is seen as a kind of empty vessel gradually filled with the rich inheritance of the past: he is nothing in himself. (19)

The difference between the cultures leads also to a difference in James's treatment of evil in American life and European life. In contrast to the multiple faces of evil in American life, James infuses a certain uniformity and melodramatic obviousness in his treatment of evil in Europe (Ward, Imagination 19). The nature of evil in "Madame de Mauves," The American, "Daisy Miller" and The Wings of the Dove illustrates this.

In the case of the international marriage, national values and characteristics such as the puritan conscience

and provincial vulgarity come into conflict with the class, rank and status consciousness and sexual freedom of the Europeans. The way in which the conflict is handled and the willingness for change and adjustment in the principals determine the success or failure of the marriage. The self-willed deaths that come about as results of failed marriages or frustrated love demonstrate the direct bearing of the international theme upon the Jamesian suicide. James places "Madame de Mauves" in the "comparatively artless category" of fiction sneakily attempting to substitute "the American romantic for the American real" (P 1204). Later in the preface, he labels Euphemia what he might have called "experimentally international; she muffled her charming head in the lightest, finest, vaguest tissue of romance" (1207). In the story, "a tale that pursues the international contrast with a vengeance" (Fogel 153-54), Euphemia Cleve's international marriage is an "arranged" one. Her own romanticized notion of marriage to European nobility, derived from her reading of romances during her European convent education, was encouraged by her wealthy American mother, who had planted the interest in her, and by her classmate and would-be sister-in-law, who advances the marriage with her impoverished, titled brother for the sake of Euphemia's money. Both

Euphemia's American mother and her European friend behave true to their respective national traits in advancing this marriage. The lure of the title works as strongly on Euphemia's mother as the attraction of the money works on her friend. After the marriage, Euphemia's inflexible puritan sense of morality prevents her from accepting her husband's promiscuous ways. What Euphemia fails to realize is the fact that to the European Baron extra-marital affairs come as naturally as her Puritan virtue comes to her. Madame Clairin, her now widowed sister-in-law, tries in vain to impress upon Euphemia the naturalness of her husband's wayward behavior. She points out that the wives of the de Mauves for generations have accepted their husbands' infidelities:

> Not one of them ever had the bad taste to be jealous, and yet not one in a dozen even consented to an indiscretion--allowed herself . . . to be talked about. . . . They were dear brave women of wit. When they had a headache they put on a little rouge and came to supper as usual, and when they had a heart-ache they touched up that quarter with just such another brush. These are great traditions and charming precedents, . . . and it doesn't seem . . . fair that a little American bourgeoise should

> come in and pretend to alter them. . . . She should fall into line, she should keep up the tone. (13: 289)

In keeping with her national traits, Madame Clairin goes so far as to suggest that Euphemia herself have an affair with Longmore, her American admirer. To Euphemia, who claims that she has "nothing on earth but a conscience" (281), the suggestion is quite unacceptable. Incapable of change or compromise, she rejects her husband. She remains inflexible even after the Baron reforms, falls in love with her, and begs her forgiveness. Toward the end of the story we learn that her uncompromising "virtue" drives her husband to suicide. In the clash between American innocence and European experience, the victim in this instance is the European.

Another marriage in "Madame de Mauves"--the de Mauve-Clairin marriage--parallels the Cleve-de Mauves marriage. The staunchest advocate and defender of the Baron's morality, his sister and Euphemia's convent-friend, Madame Clairin had herself driven her husband to suicide. Their marriage was effected by the wealth of M. Clairin, a bourgeois wholesale druggist who attempted to belong to the aristocracy by aping an aristocratic vice. What he lacked in blood and lineage, he attempted to compensate for through appearance. He gambled away his

fortune and then, unable to face his wife who had married him for his money, committed suicide. Both Euphemia and her European sister-in-law thus drive their husbands to suicide. Though neither party in this European marriage experiences displacement in national terms, M. Clairin experiences displacement in terms of class which has equally devastating effects on him.

The love-interest involving a wealthy American and titled European nobility leading to suicide in "Madame de Mauves" invites comparison with a novel James wrote two years later, The American. In its preface James highlights two aspects of his American hero--his magnanimity that would be the essence of the story (1055) and "the affront . . . done him as a lover"-- as the ones that would affect Newman the most. However, James distinguishes the affront done Newman as a lover from his rejection by his mistress by pointing out that

> injuries of this order are the stalest stuff of romance. I was not to have him jilted, any more than I was to have him successfully vindictive: both his wrong and his right would have been in these cases of too vulgar a type. I doubtless even then felt that the conception of Paris as the consecrated scene of rash infatuations and bold treacheries belongs, in

> the Anglo-Saxon imagination, to the infancy of art. The right renovation of any such theme as that would place it in Boston or at Cleveland, at Hartford or at Utica--give it some local connexion in which we had not already had so much of it. No, I should make my heroine herself, if heroine there was to be, an equal victim. (1056)

By naming American cities in opposition to Paris he makes the international nature clear. Instead of making the object of Newman's love reject him, James would place the blame on "great people" "with a fine free hand, the arrogance and cruelty, the tortuous behaviour, in given conditions, of which great people have been historically so often capable" (1057). Ultimately, his hero would have the power of knowledge that he could use against them in vengeance, but his magnanimity would take over and keep him from doing it (1057). In comparison to the earlier story, the sexes are reversed; and in place of violent physical destruction of life, we have in The American a renunciation of life, a symbolic suicide, perhaps a more meaningful and psychologically more complex act of self-destruction for the consciousness-rich Jamesian protagonist. The Bellegardes and the de Mauves have claims to centuries-old titles; both families

are equally impoverished. The Bellegardes, however, seem to have more pride in their heritage than the de Mauves do. Instead of the innocent American female marrying the experienced European in "Madame de Mauves," The American presents the innocent American male seeking to marry an almost equally innocent European girl from a not-so-innocent family. Another difference between the novel and the tale lies in the doubling of the victims in The American. Precisely as James had planned in his notebook entry, both the male and the female protagonists become victims in the face of the international conflict. The sibling motif also bears comparison. Just as Madame Clairin supports her brother, Valentin de Bellegarde supports his sister Claire de Cintré. Though unmarried, his involvement with one of his own nationality leads to his willfully seeking death in a duel. Newman's attempt at Americanizing Valentin and the latter's consequent sense of displacement also contribute to his death. Virginia Fowler argues convincingly about Newman's role in creating such a feeling (56-58). The most striking difference between the de Mauves and the Bellegardes lies in the sense of evil associated with the European nobility. With some very unpleasant skeletons in their closets, the Bellegardes create a more sinister aura than the de Mauves.

The themes of love and marriage in James's suicide fiction in an international atmosphere take on the added twist of the femme fatale motif in Roderick Hudson and The Princess Casamassima with both novels having the same destructive female. Christina Light in Roderick Hudson flirts with the young American sculptor, who is obsessed with her. Though Christina might consider marrying Roderick, her mother, equally hungry for money and position, forces her to marry the wealthy Prince Casamassima. Equally prompted by despair at such rejection and at being forced by his patron/alter-ego Rowland Mallet to face the truth about himself, Roderick Hudson destroys himself. In the preface James blames himself for the simplistic manner in which Christina Light has been made to appear the "well-nigh sole agent of his catastrophe" (1048). While it is true that Christina Light brings to a head the suicidal tendencies in Roderick Hudson already dealt with in the introductory chapter, she is by no means the sole agent of Roderick's catastrophe. I shall discuss this aspect of Roderick's life in greater detail in the next chapter, in conjunction with his quest. Having developed an interest in the Princess Casamassima, perhaps with a view to doing her more justice, James revives her in a novel named for her he would publish more than a decade later.

Since the American girl is James's central symbol of the positive qualities he saw in America, she also represents his own relation to Europe and America (Wegelin 58). According to Christof Wegelin, James's American girl fundamentally represents the Jamesian struggle of the individual "to protect his integrity and freedom against violation by the world. Almost all his heroines are engaged in a more or less outright and usually admirable conflict with the established order in which they live" (58). "What distinguished all these women is that 'moral spontaneity' which Minny Temple had had" (58) to a high degree. "Since they are often 'innocent,' too, since they illustrate the unawareness of life which struck him as 'the most general appearance' of his compatriots in Europe, the young American girl became his primary symbol of the positive aspects of the American character" (59). The displacement consequent upon transplantation in Europe has generally destructive effects on James's American females in his suicide fiction. Talking about the general unpreparedness of Americans for Europe, James says:

> It differed only for certain of the women, the younger, the youngest, those of whom least might at the best have been expected and in the interest of whose 'success' their share of the

> characteristic blankness underwent what one might call a sea-change. Conscious of so few things in the world, these unprecedented creatures . . . were least of all conscious of deficiencies and dangers; so that, the grace of youth and innocence and freshness aiding, their negatives were converted and became in certain relations lively and positive values. (P 1199)

James's American female in Europe must be distinguished from her male counterpart. In a notebook entry of November 26, 1892, James writes about

> the growing divorce between the American woman (with her comparative leisure, culture, grace, social instincts, artistic ambitions) and the male American immersed in the ferocity of business, with no time for any but the most sordid interests, purely commercial, professional, democratic and political. This divorce is rapidly becoming a gulf--an abyss of inequality, the like of which has never before been seen under the sun. (129)

Yet he does not make his men repeatedly out of the same mould, as he does in the case of his women. Whereas Minny Temple may be seen as the model for many of James's innocent American females, including Daisy Miller and

Milly Theale, we cannot readily identify any one male character from life or fiction as having been the model of several characters. This is not to say that thematically he does not repeat motifs and ideas--the most often repeated ones being the rivalry between brothers and the notion of the unlived life. The older American men who settle down abroad, like Adam Verver and Mr. Touchett, have already made their fortunes. The younger men like Chad Newsome of The Ambassadors and Frederick Winterbourne of "Daisy Miller," who have opted for extended stay, are Europeanized. Other young men like Christopher Newman and Roderick Hudson are literally and figuratively on their quests, a factor that will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter. Occasionally, there are minor characters (like the Rev. Benjamin Babcock of The American), who go to Europe on vacation. In contrast to these, the women, both young and old, except for an occasional reporter like Henrietta Stackpole, are people of leisure in quest of husbands, culture, holiday, or combinations thereof. This temperamental difference between men and women may account for the larger number of physical suicides among men and emotional/symbolic ones among women.

James's concept of the ideal American female, modelled after his favorite cousin Minny Temple, who died

at a young age, gives rise to delightful characters like Daisy Miller and Milly Theale in his works dealing with self-willed death. The importance of Minny Temple to James's works in general has already been dealt with in the chapter on autobiography. What Edel, in speaking of The Portrait of a Lady, identifies as "certain fundamental elements of a national myth," characterize Minny, Daisy and Milly: "an ideal of freedom and equality hedged with historical blindness and pride; a self-interest which often takes a form of generosity; a sense of hurt when this generosity is discerned by others as a form of wielding power" (Life 1: 622). "Daisy Miller" contains two central figures, in addition to a host of minor ones, who exemplify the American reaction to an international experience--Winterbourne, like Chad Newsome of The Ambassadors, the Europeanized American, and Daisy, the innocent American female who is likely to be adversely affected by the experience. American women in Europe, whom Richard Hocks calls "the collective antagonist" (171) of Daisy Miller, become her harsh critics. When Daisy believes that Winterbourne also joins the group of women in suspecting her innocence, she willfully contracts malaria and promptly loses her will to live. The destructive effects of Europe on Milly have already been demonstrated.

The attitude toward marriage expressed by so many of James's heroines could also be drawn from Minny Temple. A Minny Temple letter, from which James quotes in his autobiography, about her sister's impending marriage illustrates this:

> The irretrievableness of the step (her sister E.'s marriage) comes over my mind from time to time in such an overwhelming way that it's most depressing. . . . I am well aware that if all other women felt the seriousness of the matter to the extent I do, hardly any would ever marry, and the human race would stop short. (528)

As Virginia Fowler points out, in spite of Henry James's idealization of Minny Temple, he saw her as a person somehow unequipped for life. In a letter to his mother dated March 26, 1870, James says that no one would have "wished her to live longer" unless he had "some irresistible mission to reconcile her to a world to which she was essentially hostile" (L 1: 219). Fowler notes that James bequeathes a similar lack of equipment for life, initially, to his three heroines modelled after Minny Temple--Isabel Archer, Milly Theale and Maggie Verver, all of whom "are initially, like Minny Temple, unequipped for withstanding the assault of life, though

they suffer that assault differently: Isabel Archer endures it, Milly Theale dies from it, Maggie Verver triumphs over it" (11). To Fowler's list we might also add Daisy Miller as dying from it.

A "native accommodation . . . for the childish life" that James in The American Scene finds both puzzling and exasperating also provides part of the foundation for the international drama. "The youthful, innocent, unaware American girl arriving on the European scene quite clearly constitutes an enormously significant moment for James" (Fowler 30).

Fowler considers an understanding of psychology, especially Lacan's revision of Freudian views, crucial to understanding Henry James's international drama. Forced by the Otherness of Europe to recognize the world as divided and ambiguous, James's heroines respond to the encounter with the Other in different ways. In some of the early fiction, the girl "keeps her eyes closed to the Other," whereas in the novels "the girl encounters an Other who she in some ways longs to be--Isabel Archer meets Madame Merle; Milly Theale meets Kate Croy; Maggie Verver meets Charlotte Stant" (Fowler 33).

James "explores the difficulties in an American woman's benefiting from her confrontation with the Other . . . in much of the early international fiction, fiction

that tends to center itself outside the heroine's consciousness" (34). In "Madame de Mauves," for example, Fowler points out, Euphemia's fear of knowledge, with attendant pain and suffering, makes her "a person who's begging off from full knowledge," a person who wishes to live "with closed eyes" (13: 268). In Lacan's terms, this may be seen as Euphemia's closing her eyes to the "Other," to knowledge. The fear of knowledge may be equated with a fear of love; Madame de Mauves cannot love her husband because he proves so different from her expectations. Like her more fully developed sister Milly Theale, Euphemia indefinitely postpones knowledge. When knowledge forces itself upon these American innocents, the traumatic result plays havoc in their lives (Fowler 34-35). Euphemia rejects her husband; her discarded European husband kills himself, just as his sister's husband had done earlier. Ironically, Euphemia's search for completion through union with European aristocracy ends in her being an instrument of destruction for her titled husband.

Milly Theale's postponing of knowledge has devastating effects on her. When ultimately faced with betrayal, Milly, who until then had been valiantly fighting for life, gives up her claim on life. James first introduces Milly as a "striking apparition," a

"slim, constantly pale, delicately haggard, anomalously, agreeably angular young person, of not more than two-and-twenty summers, in spite of her marks" (19: 105). In her conversations and in her thoughts, Milly repeatedly demonstrates her strong will to live. Her response to Sir Luke's question whether she has any relatives at all, "I'm a survivor--a survivor of a general wreck," has more than one meaning. It obviously means that she is the only one of her family still alive; it also connotes her will to live, to survive in the face of negative odds. Recognizing Milly's "excellent spirit" and her attempt to put up with more things than she needs to, the good doctor tells her that she has a right to be happy and that she must accept any form in which happiness may come (19: 242). Yet, her exchange with the doctor at the conclusion of her second visit to Sir Luke, paints a clear picture of her concern with her condition. She asks him what must have been uppermost in her mind:

> "Shall I at any rate suffer?"
>
> "Not a bit."
>
> "And yet then live?"
>
> "My dear young lady," said her distinguished friend, "is n't to 'live' exactly what I'm trying to persuade you to take the trouble to do?" (19: 246)

The full import of the doctor's last evasive answer is not lost upon Milly. On her walk back home she feels part of the "gray immensity of London"; "gray immensity" was what Dr. Strett placed before her with the question of 'living.' As she reflects on it, she realizes that it was "as if it were in her power to live"; and also that one would normally not be treated that way "unless it had come up, quite as much, that one might die." To her, the fact that her "living" might be in her own power demanded "all the effort of the military posture," and she takes on "the fashion of a soldier on a march" (19: 248). Such reflections clearly delineate not just her will to live, but her aggressive attitude toward life: "she might, . . . literally have had her musket on her shoulder, have announced herself as freshly on the war-path" (19: 249). Walking through Regent's Park, and looking at the people around her, she cannot help musing: "They could live if they would; that is, like herself, they had been told so" (19: 250). Toward the end of her reflection, she concludes that there might after all be ways of meeting her new challenge: "It was perhaps superficially more striking that one could live if one would; but it was more appealing, insinuating, irresistible in short, that one would live if one could" (19: 254). Betrayal at the hands of "trusted" British friends induces her to decide

that she would not live even if she could.

According to Fowler, those heroines, like Daisy Miller, who remain unawakened by the European experience, frequently manifest an inability to recognize the sexual implications of their flirtatious behavior; this blindness to sexuality seems almost certainly related to the purely economic bond between the sexes in American life: "Living symbols of father's business success, and spenders of his money, these American girls tend to project a 'market' mentality onto the world in general; they treat male-female relations as a mechanical game, the gestures of which mean nothing. . . . Sexual passion--their own as well as that of the men they encounter--remains hidden and unknown" (45).

Leslie Fiedler, observing what the American novel lacks in passion and women as opposed to the European, comments that Henry James stands "oddly between our own traditions and the European ones we rejected or recast" (25). Fiedler also sees the themes of self-punishment and self-destruction as inseparable from the worship of the Female, who represents "the dissolution of consciousness as well as poetic vision, the blackness of extinction as well as that of ecstasy" (51).

Fiedler traces woman's dissatisfaction with her status quo as far back as to Hester Prynne (223) and

points out that during the second half of the nineteenth century the idea of the rebellious female is quite realistic. Thus the rebellion of a character like Daisy Miller against established norms of conduct is reasonable for the time. The American emphasis on the dangers of passion leads an author like Hawthorne to show that women, far from leading men toward grace, only promise madness and damnation (Fiedler, 236). The American in James must have induced him to make women characters at least partially responsible for the self-destructive acts of men in "Osborne's Revenge," "Madame de Mauves," Roderick Hudson, The Princess Casamassima and "Sir Edmund Orme." The two Civil War stories in which the young men lose their will to live when they lose their loves also illustrate the destructive aspect of the feminine mystique. Even well into the nineteenth century, American novelists, placing woman on a pedestal, denied her sexuality. Alongside of the idealized fair maiden, they also presented the dark lady, the sinister embodiment of the sexuality denied the snow maiden (Fiedler 296).

The international theme, "the encompassing framework of the central tragic experience of The Wings of the Dove" (Krook 203), is equally important to the development of most of Henry James's suicide fiction.

Even when suicide is not directly the result of an international conflict, as in the case of "Madame de Mauves" and "The Modern Warning," most of James's suicides are set in an international context. In "The Pupil," for example, even though the story deals with an itinerant American family in Europe, the international theme is not relevant to Morgan Moreen's death, in part caused by a loss of will to live. Comparing Hyacinth Robinson to Morgan Moreen in "The Pupil," James adds that "it is much in this manner [the manner of Hyacinth Robinson], . . . that Morgan Moreen breaks down--his burden indeed not so heavy, but his strength so much less formed" (1170). The second son of an itinerant, impoverished American family in Europe, trying to maintain a genteel facade, Morgan Moreen develops an attachment for his English tutor. Ashamed of his family and feeling alienated, he comes to look upon his English tutor as a savior. Plagued by a heart condition and perturbed by an apparent rejection by his tutor, young Morgan Moreen succumbs. Insofar as his health continued as long as his fantasy was alive, it seems reasonable to conclude that a loss of will to live caused by disillusionment hastened his death. James's ambivalent feelings toward America and Europe must account for the self-destructive effects of an international encounter to

fall sometimes on the innocent Americans and at other times on the Europeans. His concept of American womanhood, in line with established American attitudes in fiction, leads to two kinds of female characters in his works dealing with suicide. On the one hand, we have portraits of young Americans like Daisy Miller and Milly Theale who, when confronted with European evil, lose their vibrant zest for life and even lose their will to live. On the other hand, we have a character like Euphemia Cleve, who carries her American virtue to a fault in Europe and pushes her rakish French husband to suicide. In James's international fiction delineating suicide, women share the responsibility for six of the physical suicides of men in Jamesian fiction. Robert Graham's suicide in "Osborne's Revenge," the suicides of the Baron de Mauves, his brother-in-law M. Clairin, Roderick Hudson, Hyacinth Robinson and Sir Edmund Orme are directly attributable to women. This destructive aspect of the female takes on the mythic aura of the femme fatale in a character like Christina Light, the Princess Casamassima. The failure of the international marriage only reflects the larger motif of failures of marriage in general in James's fiction. The result of the typical encounter between American innocence and European experience has been shown to be sometimes

salutary, sometimes destructive, for those involved. The sense of displacement itself that accompanies an international experience provokes self-destructive thoughts. Since love interest colors all of James's suicides except for the one in "A Round of Visits," a study of the role of the woman clearly sheds additional light on his treatment of the phenomenon.

Note

[1]Alfred Habegger makes an interesting study of James's rewriting of the Minny Temple letters. Though James's revisions are extensive, the contents of the letters in relation to this study remain largely unchanged.

Chapter 5

The Failed Quest

The journey motif implicit in the international theme leads naturally to the Quest motif, crucial to James's consciousness-probing fictions, especially to those dealing with suicide. An analysis of the Quest motif in James's suicide fiction brings together the various elements of his suicide myth I have so far dealt with in this dissertation. The interest in death in general and suicide in particular was clearly a natural outcome of a life that had encountered more than the number of deaths and suicides that an average person encounters in a lifetime. The many suicides among close acquaintances and the prevalence of suicides in popular nineteenth-century fiction must have led to the delineation of physical suicides as a fact of life in James's fiction. The will to live, very strong among the Jameses, clearly influenced the delineation of characters who valiantly cling to life even in the face of negative odds but who die when they lose their will to live. The autobiographical influence continues in the treatment of the international theme and the quest. A journey, either physical or mental, the most inalienable part of the quest and an integral part of James's life, also

symbolizes the failed quests of many of James's suicides. Leslie Fiedler aptly expresses the quest theme implicit in the international theme when he describes characters like Lambert Strether as "ambassadors without portfolio, who go to Paris to discover America and their own souls" (191). James's interest in the theme places him in the mainstream of nineteenth-century American fiction that delineates the Quest in such classics as the prose epic Moby Dick and the less ambitious though equally archetypal "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." Scholars, including Leslie Fiedler, Daniel Fogel, Hugh Holman, Ellen Tremper and J. A. Ward, have noted the prevalence of the quest theme in James's fiction. In addition to the journey (external and/or internal), which leads to discovery, one or several of the following elements generally characterize James's delineation of suicides: a highly self-conscious, often artistic sensibility, knowledge that comes often in epiphanic form, and salutary effects of the suicide on survivors who may be the Jamesian observer (as Holman convincingly shows) and/or characters involved in the action. Milly Theale best exemplifies all these characteristics. Her long meditations reveal the high degree of her self-consciousness. Though not artistically inclined, when exposed to art, her sensibilities are aroused. Epiphanic

knowledge comes to Milly with devastating force. The self-sacrificial nature of her death when she turns her face to the wall transforms Merton Densher. Suicidal characters like Roderick Hudson and Hyacinth Robinson combine self-consciousness with artistic sensibility. Daisy Miller's death has a reforming effect on Winterbourne.

James's essentially Puritan view of life as a kind of pilgrimage that involves a trial of the individual (Ward, Imagination 14) is particularly relevant to his treatment of self-willed death. The Puritan emphasis on the individual must also have influenced his concentration on the individual consciousness and the necessity for experience and his condemnation of the unlived life led by characters like John Marcher. Despite the importance of the physical journey as represented by the international fiction, James's characteristic emphasis on consciousness leads to an internalization of the quest. Insofar as "James's tales are tales of the mind in the act of finding" (Bender 250), the discoveries his characters make that lead to self-destruction call for scrutiny.

The Jamesian Quest incorporates elements identified by Frederick W. Locke, Jessie L. Weston and Harold Bloom. Locke's "spiritual quest," Bloom's "internalized quest-

romance," and Weston's "search into the secret and mystery of life," all aptly describe the emphasis on the workings of the mind that characterizes the Jamesian Quest. Death, which Locke sees as the natural end of the quest, "a night journey from which no man will return as he left, if he returns at all," happens to be self-willed in cases under study here. What Locke attributes to death in general in regard to the quest may be applied with equal validity to James's suicides, especially in regard to the effects of the suicides on the survivors. Since suicides are generally failed quests, and since the original seeker does not benefit from the end-result, the benefits of the quest are vicariously experienced by the survivors.

> It is the 'return' to whatever is nearest to the heart of each man that sets him on his quest. It is the search for the ultimate foundation of his being, for that which lies behind all the images of reality and which creates for him those images. The truth that the quester discovers at the end of the journey is essentially incommunicable and can be only obliquely suggested. Its multivalency reflects the Woman, the Home, the <u>Patria</u>, the City, the Pot of Gold, the Awakening of the Land cast

into sleep, and ultimately, the deepest secrets of the Self.

> When the Quest begins, there is a blight upon the land. No man can achieve the goal of his seeking unguided. But suddenly out of the Mer will arise the Castle that holds the Treasure, or across the Sea in a Distant Land the Journey will end with . . . Death. It is a dark voyage, a night journey from which no man will return as he left, if he returns at all. The way is long and the dangers almost insurmountable, and if he be alone, man cannot succeed in the high adventure. . . . And when the goal is reached, the treasure acquired, the vision beheld, there is nothing but a stammering of human speech, and to those who do not already know, no knowledge is given. . . . Unless the secret is in some way known, it will not be revealed. (3)

Knowledge comes to those who already know it in some way, but do not recognize it. Hence, probably, the suddenness of the impact of revelation that comes with recognition that either enriches or destroys people. In the case of James's suicides, such recognition leads variously to violent physical self-destruction or a passive losing of

the will to live in the suicides and, sometimes, a salutary effect in the survivors. Though the Jamesian quester seldom seeks the literal pot of gold, the Woman, the Home, the Patria, the City and ultimately the deepest secrets of the Self, all express the multivalency of the truth discovered. As in the case of the most archetypal of Christian quests, that for the Grail, the familiar literary pattern of the Quest is a journey, a pilgrimage, a search, which in itself is more important than the object of the quest. Jessie L. Weston's identification of the Grail Quest as "an initiation story, as a search into the secret and mystery of life [as] the record of an initiation manqué" (95), illustrates the Bildungsroman aspect of the suicides of Roderick Hudson and Hyacinth Robinson, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. In identifying the Quest as an instrument of insight as opposed to a symbol, and in pointing out that the archetypal movement of the Quest is from obscurity and darkness to light and vision, Locke (5) emphasizes the gaining of knowledge as a crucial element of the Quest. Like Weston and Locke, Harold Bloom also insists the journey is more important than the destination. In his emphasis on the journey and the elements of the Quest, Bloom identifies the Romance with the Quest:

> Romance is journey toward home, the hero's home

> though not the reader's, nor even a home where the hero might bear to abide. Or, romance is a journey toward a supreme trial, after which home is possible, or else homelessness will suffice. At the least, we are given a quester and his quest, antagonists and temptations, a presiding goal. (3)

According to Bloom, English Romanticism is "an internalization of romance, particularly of the quest variety, an internalization made for more than therapeutic purposes, because made in the name of a harmonizing hope that approaches apocalyptic intensity."

The quests of James's characters generally follow the established pattern of the romantic quest, ably dealt with by Daniel Fogel in Henry James and the Structure of the Romantic Imagination. However, since most suicides are failed quests, the element of return in "the journey around and back, on a higher level, to the point of origin" (4) often does not characterize James's self-destructive seekers. Sometimes when the polarities become thoroughly irreconcilable and the shock of recognition becomes unbearable for the Jamesian character (protagonist as well as minor character), he chooses to destroy his physical self, at times through violent means and at other times through losing his will.

Paradoxically, this ultimate action of negation sometimes has salutary effects on survivors who make siginificant discoveries about themselves as a result of having observed the suicide. Thus, based on their effects, the suicides (failed quests) in James's fiction may be divided into two categories--those in which the questers, unable to withstand the force of recognition (epiphanic knowledge), will their own deaths, generating a sense of unrelieved devastation and negation, and those in which the suicides have salutary effects on survivors. Roderick Hudson, The Princess Casamassima, "The Modern Warning," "The Patagonia" and "The Pupil" provide examples of self-willed deaths without any redeeming effects. "Osborne's Revenge," "Madame de Mauves," "Daisy Miller," The Wings of the Dove and "A Round of Visits" illustrate the effects of suicides on survivors, thus constituting what Hugh Holman calls a peculiarly American form of the Bildungsroman. Though Holman's label is not restricted to works of self-willed deaths, he includes two such Jamesian tales--"Daisy Miller" and "Madame de Mauves"--in the category, along with such American classics as Moby Dick and "My Kinsman Major Molineux." Works in both categories belong to the Bildungsroman tradition. Thus, Roderick Hudson and The Princess Casamassima illustrate the typical Bildungsroman, as

distinguished from the Bildungsroman of the witness character. The search for health and a strong will to live, until sudden knowledge destroys such determination, characterize the quests of protagonists in "The Story of a Year," "A Most Extraordinary Case," The Wings of the Dove and The Pupil. The American defies similar classification and is unique in that the protagonist's quest leads to two acts of self-destruction in others. Because the suicides in Watch and Ward and "Sir Edmund Orme" remain strictly in the background, providing the occasions for the stories, and because they are not related to the quests of the characters in the respective works, I shall exclude these two works from detailed analysis in this chapter.

Since the archetypal quest often ends in death, though not necessarily by suicide, the failed quest may be viewed as James's way of accounting for self-destructive acts and fitting them into the general framework of his personal myth. At its most elemental level, the Jamesian quest involves a journey, either literal or figurative, variously described as "a hunt of some kind, by an egoist which brings him face to face with his alter ego" (Tremper 59), a "pilgrimage" (Ward, Imagination 14), and "a journey toward the culture of museums and guidebooks and a descent into hell" (Fiedler

483). Sanford echoes Fiedler's sentiment when he comments on the assumption of the moral superiority of the Americans which leads to the polarization of America and Europe as paradise and hell respectively (106-108). Though James's attitude toward America and Europe are essentially ambivalent, as already shown in the previous chapter, for his suicidal characters the journeys become descents into hell. The journey in James's suicide fiction, whether a physical journey or a journey of the mind, suggests the road to destruction, a descent into hell. In the works dealing with physical suicides with European settings, the journeys undertaken by innocent American protagonists end up being descents into hell. In "Madame de Mauves" two Americans make such descents. In addition to Euphemia, for whom the story is named, and whose romantic notions about life in Europe as wife of a titled European are proved wrong, Longmore, the casual American visitor in Europe, who learns from observing her, for the most part with great admiration, is sadly disillusioned. Longmore's admiration turns sour when he learns that Euphemia, virtuous to a fault, had pushed her husband to suicide by her refusal to forgive him after his reformation. In the beginning, the girl-Euphemia, who seeks to realize her romantic dream of identification with European nobility, appears to be the quester.

However, when her dream turns into a nightmare, an involuntary seeker, the observer Longmore, gains from his observations. As such, the story depicts his growth. The journey motif is stronger in Roderick Hudson, The Princess Casamassima and The Wings of the Dove, in which the protagonists who undertake the journey are provoked to destroy themselves, at least in part as a result of their journeys. In these works the journey to Europe may be seen as what Fiedler calls the "descent into hell" (483) and what Sanford describes as "America, the land of destiny, the land of nature and God, . . . going, after all, to hell, the way of Europe" (110).

Recognizing the talent in Roderick Hudson, Rowland Mallet, soon after his introduction to the artist, undertakes the financial responsibility for transporting him from culturally arid Northampton, Massachusetts, to artistically fertile Europe and for educating him there. Within the framework of the larger journey, undertaken upon Rowland's initiative, Roderick undertakes several smaller ones, on his own. The need for both physical and spiritual journeys in Roderick and Rowland becomes evident in the novel.

Rowland, who may be seen as Roderick's alter ego and who literally and figuratively takes Roderick on his quest, is himself on a quest. Early in the novel, he

confesses his need for a spiritual journey:

> I'm clever enough to want more than I've got. I'm tired of myself, my own thoughts, my own affairs, my own eternal company. True happiness, we are told, consists in getting out of one's self; but the point is not only to get out--you must stay out; and to stay out you must have some absorbing errand. Unfortunately I have no errand, and nobody will trust me with one. I want to care for something or for somebody. And I want to care, . . . with a certain intensity; even . . . with a certain passion. . . . Do you know I sometimes think that I'm a man of genius half-finished? The genius has been left out, the faculty of expression is wanting; but the need for expression remains, and I spend my days groping for the latch of a closed door. (1: 7-8)

He acknowledges vicarious enjoyment of Roderick's good fortune which would give "at least a reflected usefulness" to his own life (1: 49). Stretched on the ground beside Roderick in Northampton, and contemplating his flight to Europe, Rowland can only blame himself. "It's a wretched business . . . this virtual quarrel of ours with our own country, this everlasting impatience

that so many of us feel to get out of it. Can there be no battle then, and is one's only safety in flight?" Experiencing "an American day, an American landscape, an American atmosphere," he concedes, "It certainly has its merits" (1: 32) Later, Rowland justifies his longing for Europe to Mary Garland: "I have the misfortune to be rather an idle man, and in Europe both the burden and the obloquy of idleness are less heavy than here" (1: 74). To her question, "Wouldn't it be better . . . to get at some work in order to get reconciled to America than to go to Europe just in order to get reconciled to sloth?" (1: 74), he offers the feeble excuse that "work doesn't come to everyone's hand" (1: 74). Trained to no profession, Rowland sees an additional advantage in Europe. He tells Mary, "There at least if I do nothing I shall see a great deal; and if I'm not a producer I shall at any rate be an observer" (1: 75).

Roderick's quest is inseparable from Rowland's, who considers the world "a delightful place of sojourn, until the contrary should be distinctly proved" (1: 16). Cecilia, who repeatedly refers to Roderick's artistic temperament, also believes that he is not aware of his artistic ability: "The flame smoulders, but it's never fanned by the breath of criticism. He sees nothing, hears nothing, to help him to self-knowledge. He's

hopelessly discontented, but he does n't know where to look for help" (1: 29). Thus, James indicates the need for a spiritual journey also for Roderick Hudson. With authorial commentary, he foreshadows the failure of the spiritual journey. For example, when Rowland criticizes the American yearning for Europe, Roderick gallantly defends America and American art. The authorial commentary on Roderick's extempore speech indicates his shallowness and lack of conviction: "He had evidently thought nothing whatever about it--he was launching his doctrine on the inspiration of the moment. The doctrine expanded with the occasion, and he declared that he was above all an advocate for American art" (1: 32-33). Yet Roderick readily accepts Rowland's offer of Rome. Once in Rome, he quickly changes his attitude. He declares that "he meant to live and die within the shadow of Saint Peter's and that he cared little if he should never again draw breath in American air. 'For a man of my temperament Rome is the only place'" (1: 173). Having lived a few months in Rome, he would later equate life in Northampton with being buried alive (1: 458). Before settling down in Rome, other wanderings in Europe had taken them to Paris and the Louvre, Genoa, Milan, Venice and Florence. Soon, when "Nothing comes" (1: 126) to Roderick, Rowland decides it is time to move on; but

Roderick thinks, "My journey will do me more good if I take it alone" (1: 127). Six months after leaving Northampton, they separate.

The travel imagery, especially in relation to travel by water, reinforces the journey motif in Roderick Hudson. When Rowland meets with very little success in his attempt to prevent Roderick's destruction at Christina's hands, he approaches the lady and makes a case for her having to abandon Roderick; claiming his own responsibility for Roderick and using journey imagery, he says: "I made him burn his ships, I brought him to Rome, I launched him in the world, and I've undertaken to answer to--to his mother for his doing well. It's not such smooth sailing as it might be, and I'm inclined to put up prayers for fair winds" (1: 282). In his letter to Cecilia, Rowland continues the voyage imagery: "When he came back to Rome, however, I saw that the tide had turned and that we were close upon the rocks. It's in fact another case of Ulysses and the Sirens; only Roderick refuses to be tied to the mast" (1: 294). Such imagery becomes more sinister when Rowland foresees Roderick's destruction. Rowland, himself in love with Mary Garland, at one point thinks of helping Roderick along his path of destruction and making his agony brief (1: 314).

Roderick himself sees his life in Europe as a descent into hell when he declares to his mother in Rome:

> I'm an angry, savage, disappointed, miserable man. I mean that I can't do a stroke of work nor think a profitable thought. I mean that I'm in a state of helpless rage and grief and shame. . . . Give up being proud of me too; there's nothing left of me to be proud of. A year or two ago . . . I myself then really believed I was a swell. . . . [Now] I've gone utterly to the devil." (1: 423-24)

He admits, "If I had n't come to Rome I should n't have risen, and if I had n't risen I should n't have fallen" (1: 436). At Villa Pandolfini, near Florence, Roderick, having felt that an essential spring had dried up within him, has to fight suicidal and murderous thoughts: "It was doing one's duty to hold one's tongue and keep one's hands off one's own windpipe and other people's" (1: 445). Soon, he foresees his end. On the Lake of Como, asking Rowland for pity, he says: "Look at this lovely world and think what it must be to be dead to it! . . . Dead, dead; dead and buried! Buried in an open grave where you lie staring up at the sailing clouds, smelling the waving flowers and hearing all nature live and grow

above you" (1: 466).

In The Princess Casamassima the journey motif embellishes Hyacinth Robinson's search for identity and his longing for upward mobility through social classes. An unpleasant but memorable journey early in life that takes Hyacinth to the prison to visit a dying inmate marks the beginning of his quest for identity. Later on, it takes a lot of coaxing from Hyacinth and Mr. Vetch to persuade Amanda Pynsent to convey the significance of that journey to Hyacinth. He then learns for the first time the unpleasant truth about his origins. If it took Pinnie several years to let Hyacinth know his parentage, it took several more years for Hyacinth to confide the same to anyone else. Much later, the Princess Casamassima at Medley would become Hyacinth's first confidante as to what he was (6:61). James's choice of words to describe the first impression the Princess Casamassima makes on Hyacinth connotes the movement through class structure that the encounter represents; she makes him feel "strangely transported" (5: 207). Paul Muniment's comment to Hyacinth, "You're one of those taking little beggars who must run about and see the world" (5: 235) also underscores his questing nature. Further journey imagery suggests Hyacinth's movement through social classes. James calls the secret journey

to the back bedroom of a house where Hyacinth took his vow a "pilgrimage in the cab" (6: 22). He uses loftier language to describe Hyacinth's first drive in a coach at Medley in the company of the Princess and Madame Grandoni. Using a term from English royal practice, James describes this ride as a "progress" with high respectability that made it very memorable for Hyacinth. With some irony, he adds: "There might still be greater joys in store for him--he was by this time quite at sea and could recognize no shores" (6: 27). Hyacinth continues to use the language of the pilgrimage in regard to his revolutionary commitment when he talks to the Princess about his recent vow: "I was hanging about outside, on the steps of the temple, among the loafers and the gossips, but now I've been in the innermost sanctuary. Yes, I've seen the holy of holies" (6: 48).

A product of the city and a member of the lower classes who aspires equally to belong to an anarchist group and to be of the upper class, Hyacinth journeys to anarchist meetings and the Princess's country estate. His guardian's death facilitates a larger journey in the style of the traditional grand tour in Europe. Journeys of the mind that other characters in the novel undertake reinforce the meaning of Hyacinth's journey through life. J. A. Ward's account of this effectively sums up the

idea:

> The novel is full of occasions in which someone sets out to discover, possess, or be absorbed into an alien class. The titled women, the Princess and Lady Aurora, court lower-class revolutionaries; Millicent abandons her Lomax Place origins to make a situation for herself in the fringe world of high fashion; the progress of the 'disinherited' Hyacinth is tentative, yet complex and instructive: he gains a drab security through his job as bookbinder, and from there is tempted by the contradictory appeals of upper-class aesthetics and lower-class politics. Pinnie and Rosie achieve a vicarious gentility through the friendship of Lady Aurora; and Muniment, the political radical, is really seeking a commomplace bourgeois security. (119)

The journey, educational in effect, leads to self-destruction in James's suicide fiction. In Roderick Hudson and The Princess Casamassima, the narratives of the process of maturation in two young men fit the pattern of the traditional Bildungsroman. Roderick's pattern of growth fits Lionel Trilling's definition of the genre as "the story of the Young Man from the

Provinces, the poor, naive, but remarkably able and sensitive young protagonist who moves from provincial life to a major city, and there encounters the tests which make or destroy him" (Trilling 61). In moving Roderick from provincial Northampton "to live in the lap of the incomparable sorceress [Rome]" for the education of the senses and the imagination (1: 172), Rowland acts as the navigator of his voyage through life. Roderick's education takes the form of the traditional grand tour under Rowland's tutelage. Encounters with other artists help his artistic coming of age while his exposure to culture and his encounters with women shape his personal growth. Three months after leaving Northampton, Roderick feels immensely wiser, "Wise with the wisdom of the ages and the taste of a thousand fountains." According to Rowland, Roderick is, "in the literal sense of the word, more civilised." However, Roderick's recognition that Mary Garland would consider him "spoiled" and "hideously corrupted" (1: 86), foreshadows an ominous ending. Amply provided authorial commentary makes it clear that Roderick's quest in Rome at first is successful. "Certainly, among the young men of genius who for so many ages have gone up to Rome to test their powers, none ever made a fairer beginning than Roderick. He rode his two horses at once with extraordinary good fortune; he

established the happiest modus vivendi betwixt work and play" (1: 102). After a period of intensity during which Roderick produces Adam and Eve, Gloriani's prediction that Roderick will not be able to keep it up, in a word, that he shall "fizzle out" because "passion burns out, inspiration runs to seed" (1: 124) comes true. Gloriani's description of Roderick's art as "the effort of a man to quit the earth by flapping his arms very hard," may be considered prophetic of his ending. When Roderick realizes that Gloriani's prophecy might be fulfilled in him, he tells Rowland using journey imagery,

> Nothing is more common than for an artist who has set out on his journey on a high-stepping horse to find himself all of a sudden dismounted and invited to go his way on foot. You can number them by the thousand--the people of two or three successes; the poor fellows whose candle burnt out in a night. . . I'm prepared at any rate, for a fizzle. It won't be a tragedy, simply because I sha n't assist at it. The end of my work shall be the end of my life. . . . I'm not making vulgar threats of the dagger or the bowl; . . . My mind is like a dead calm in the tropics, and my imagination as motionless as the blighted ship in the 'Ancient

Mariner'!" (1: 230-31)

Roderick's association of himself with "The Ancient Mariner," the Romantic work that probably best portrays the burden of the individual search for self-realization, underscores the quest motif in the novel. Coleridge's poem on the archetypal Wandering Jew theme, combining navigational realism with the larger themes of guilt, retribution and rebirth, death-in-life and rebirth in love, functions as an appropriate metaphor for Roderick's blighted condition. Though Rowland discounts the vehemence, marking it off to Roderick's tendency for hyperbole, the statement accurately describes his artistic career. Rowland's sense of responsibility for the artist prompts him to report to Roderick's mother when they decide to go their separate ways in Europe. On his arrival in England,

> he had it on his conscience to write to Mrs. Hudson and inform her that her son had relieved him of his tutelage. He felt that she thought of him as an incorruptible Mentor, following Roderick like a shadow, and he wished to let her know the truth. But he made the truth very comfortable and gave a detailed account of the young man's brilliant beginnings. . . . He was now taking a well-earned holiday and proposing

> to see a little of the world. . . . every artist needed to take chances and seek impressions for himself. They had parted company for a couple of months, as Roderick was now a great man and beyond the need of going about with a keeper. (1: 130)

When the long-awaited letter comes from Roderick on tour, it is to ask for money (thus fitting into the popular pattern of parent/student-child relationship).

Encounters with women, typically a part of a young man's coming of age, characterize Roderick's Bildungsroman. His engagement to Mary Garland, back in America, does not prevent him from getting involved with women in Europe. After his independent journey in Europe, when he meets his mentor in Geneva, Roderick describes his experiences with women. Claiming that he had fallen in with bad companions, he admits that he has passed time "in dangling about several very pretty women and reflecting that it was always something gained for a sculptor to sit under a tree looking at his leisure into a charming face and saying things that made it smile and play its muscles and part its lips and show its teeth" (1: 138). Life with such "led him to the discovery that to live with ladies almost crudely on the look-out for mementoes of friendship . . . though it might be a

privilege, was a privilege with a penalty attached" (1: 138-39). As he admits, the summer's experience convinces him that he is "damnably susceptible, by nature, to the grace and the beauty and the mystery of women, to their power to turn themselves 'on' as creatures of subtlety and perversity" (1: 142). Just as Roderick fulfills Gloriani's prophecy about his artistic development, he fulfills Cecilia's prediction about his involvement with women. Informed of his early success in Rome, Cecilia had written to Rowland: "I believed he would do fine things, but I was sure he would intersperse them with a good many follies, and that his beautiful statues would spring up out of the midst of a dense plantation of wild oats" (1: 131). Though his mother had announced Roderick's engagement to Mary Garland, Cecilia expects that he must have picked up "a few graces in your wonderful Rome" (1: 132).

Roderick's involvement with one woman turns out to be fatal for him. Christina Light's destructive influence appears to be widely acknowledged by people, including her parents and her husband. According to Mrs. Light, "The artists are all crazy about her. When she goes into a studio she's fatal to the pictures" (1: 155). The Cavaliere, who turns out to be her father, warns Roderick that he would only get hurt by Christina,

because she must have "a princely title" and "a princely fortune" (1: 204) and "a great position and a brilliant destiny" (1: 206). Later, in The Princess Casamassima, her husband, the Prince, acknowledges her destructive influence on him when he proposes to Madame Grandoni that his wife should not kill him inch by inch (5: 271). After the visit of Christina and her mother to the studio, Rowland, placing her in the category of 'unsafe' women, warns Roderick that she is dangerous (1: 160). Gloriani compares her to Salome, daughter of Herodias, "the macabre" maiden of the Christian story (1: 190). The warnings against the Princess, given to Hyacinth Robinson in the later novel, parallel these warnings. When Rowland tries to warn Roderick against getting involved with Miss Light, James's "Young Man from the Provinces" claims to have completed his initiation. He declares: "I'm not a small boy nor a country lout any longer, and whatever I do I do with my eyes open" (1: 220). Rowland discovers at this point that Roderick has neither conscience nor a feeling heart (1: 220).

Roderick's attraction to Christina, which can only be described as an obsession far more powerful than the unselfish love of Mary Garland, leads to his destruction. When Rowland forces him to see the truth about himself, he kills himself by jumping off a cliff, as if to fulfill

his own prophecy about being buried in an open grave. Oscar Cargill has suggested that knowing the inherent weaknesses of Roderick's character, whom his creator described as having "a large capacity for ruin" (P 1047), we should place the blame for his destruction on himself and not on an external agent. Cargill attempts to discount the role of Europe and Christina Light upon Roderick's destruction by arguing that his journey to Europe brought Roderick into relation with a catalytic agent, Christina Light, who merely hastened an inevitable ruin (28). Since James himself acknowledges Christina's role in Roderick's ruin, Cargill's deemphasis of her function may be unjustifiable. In his reevaluation of the novel for the New York edition, James regrets "the determinant function attributed to Christina Light, the character of well-nigh sole agent of his catastrophe" (P 1047-48), thus emphasizing her destructive role in the novel. Ultimate responsibility for actions rests with the individual, but discounting the role of outside agents would be simplistic. Christina's role in Roderick's destruction, then, should not be underestimated. That Christina's role is indisputably that of the femme fatale is reinforced by the fact that James's hope of softening her destructive capacity by resurrecting her in The Princess Casamassima backfired.

In that novel also she remains, characteristically, a femme fatale, who tends to heighten the conflict Hyacinth Robinson experiences between the laboring class he is brought up in and the aristocratic class to which he secretly aspires and to which he believes he has a rightful claim through his aristocratic natural father. James's protagonist in this novel, who longs for a sense of belonging, feels unsettled. The consequent displacement affects him the same way as geographical displacement affects Jamesian characters dealt with in the previous chapter. His journey to France accentuates this sense of displacement and produces unsettling effects similar to those experienced by Americans going to Europe.

Hyacinth's dealings with three women parallel his concern with class structure and the resultant question of identity. Millicent Henning represents the lowest social class; Rose Muniment, though not standing much higher, has pretensions to a higher class; the Princess Casamassima represents the highest social class. Millicent Henning, on the lowest rung of the social ladder, thinks of herself as

> the 'best sort' in the world, as well as one of the greatest beauties and quickest wits, and there could be no better proof of her kindness

> of heart than her disinterested affection for a snippet of a bookbinder. . . . She represented for Hyacinth during this period the eternal feminine, and his taste, considering he was fastidious, will be wondered at; the judgment will be that she didn't represent it very favourably. (5: 162)

Hyacinth's assessment of Millicent reflects an ambivalence, the result of his class consciousness. In a long passage of narrative commentary James tells us that Millicent represents for Hyacinth his own absorption in the struggle and suffering of the lower classes, though she herself was not bothered by similar concerns (5: 163). Hyacinth's interest in the betterment of the lower classes leads him to interact with a member of the upper classes, the Princess Casamassima, with whom he becomes infatuated. Despite warnings from Mr. Vetch, Paul Muniment, the Princess's husband and Madame Grandoni, her elderly companion, Hyacinth Robinson continues to be obsessively interested in the Princess, whose interest in him is at best clinical. Madame Grandoni explains Hyacinth Robinson to an inquisitive prince as "a study," part of the studies the Princess is making of "the lower orders" (5: 305). A conversation between Sholto and Madame Grandoni in Chapter 26 makes it clear that

Hyacinth has been chosen to be sacrificed. According to Madame Grandoni, "He's much too good for his fate" (6: 80). In his own estimation, "a mere particle in the grey immensity of the people" (5: 216), Hyacinth is a willing victim. Just as Rowland gets concerned over Roderick's obsessive involvement with Christina and takes it upon himself to plead with her to release her hold on Roderick, Mr. Vetch, toward the conclusion of Book Fourth, takes it upon himself to plead with her to release Hyacinth. After telling her, "You've taken possession of his life" (6: 241), he implores the Princess, "For God's sake get the boy out of his muddle" (6: 244). Claiming a large responsibility for Hyacinth, Mr. Vetch confesses: "I wanted him to quarrel with society. Now I want him to be reconciled to it" (6: 242). Rose Muniment, also of the working class, but with airs of the upper class, tends to heighten his class consciousness. A working-class woman, she appears to live vicariously with the aristocracy and serves as a bridge between the two females that affect him the most. That he is torn between the two social classes is suggested by the fact that toward the end of the novel, when deeply perturbed over his revolutionary mission, he seeks out his female friends from both classes. Apparent rejection at the hands of Millicent and the Princess,

representatives of the two ends of the social spectrum, pushes Hyacinth toward suicide.

Just like Hyacinth's movement through the social classes, his geographical movement also produces ambivalence in him and contributes to his suicide. While appreciating the cultural and aesthetic beauties of Paris, he cannot help becoming intensely aware of the French Revolution. Hyacinth's innate ambivalence toward society's class structure, which has only been heightened by his association with the Princess Casamassima, comes to a clear head during his European travel. In a letter to her from Venice, he details the changes that have taken place in him and even goes so far as to assign partial responsibility for the change to her. He expresses the change in strong terms in reference to Hoffendahl:

> If there's one thing that's more clear about him than another, it's that he would n't have the least feeling for this incomparable abominable old Venice. He would cut up the ceilings of the Veronese into strips, so that everyone might have a little piece. I don't want everyone to have a little piece of anything and I've a great horror of that kind of invidious jealousy which is at the bottom of

> the idea of a redistribution. (6: 146)

The travel through Europe having crystallized his class feelings, Hyacinth confesses toward the end of the letter:

> During the last three months there has crept over me a deep distrust of that same grudging attitude--the intolerance of positions and fortunes that are higher and brighter than one's own; a fear moreover that I may in the past have been actuated by such motives, and a devout hope that if I'm to pass away while I'm yet young it may not be with that odious stain upon my soul. (6: 146)

While the quest for artistic identity dominates Roderick's Bildungsroman, that for social identity dominates Hyacinth's in The Princess Casamassima. The undisputed facts of Hyacinth's parentage reveal him to be the son of a lower-class French woman who murdered an English aristocrat and died in penal servitude after her death sentence was commuted at the last minute. Though his paternity is disputed, the implications are that the man his mother murdered is his father, Lord Frederick Purvis.

The concluding chapter of the first book contains the detailed analysis of Hyacinth Robinson's class

consciousness. Drawn into the revolutionary cause by some of his surrogate family--the parental Poupins and the fraternal Paul--he becomes the one chosen to commit the ultimate anarchist act. Despite such commitment to the Cause, he appears to lean instinctively toward the aristocracy. Even though the leveling of the social classes to which he aspires has taken place in his blood, he repeatedly talks about his possible aristocratic connection with pride. His creator tells us early in the novel that "our young man had always held" the upper-class British home to be "the highest fruit of civilization" (5: 252). Though Hyacinth feels proud of his aristocratic blood, he is ashamed of his mother's blood: "He had no wish to be a leader because his mother had murdered her lover and died in penal servitude: these circumstances recommended intentness but they also imposed modesty" (5: 342). His reaction to the Princess's invitation for him to spend a week at Medley reflects his longing for aristocratic stature and pleasure:

> All warnings, reflexions, considerations of verisimilitude, of the delicate, the natural and the possible, of the value of his independence, had become as nothing to him. The cup of an exquisite experience--a week in

> that enchanted palace, a week of such immunity from Lomax Place and old Crook as he had never dreamed of--was at his lips; it was purple with the wine of romance, of reality, of civilization, and he could n't push it aside without drinking. (6: 41)

His interest in the revolutionary cause appears to be an accident precipitated by encounters with people like Paul Muniment, the Poupins, Princess Casamassima and Lady Aurora. Even when actively involved in the revolutionary cause, he admires "the flower of a high civilization" (5: 170), its aristocracy, and is perturbed that the enthronement of democracy cannot be reconciled with the maintaining of aristocracy (5: 171). After he has taken the measure of his heredity (5: 173), Hyacinth "regarded himself immutably as the son of the recreant and sacrificed Lord Frederick" (5: 174). The stigma of a bastardly birth is considerably lightened for him by the reflection that his father was a gentleman (5: 174). In the final analysis, "He was happy to feel that he had blood in his veins that would account for the finest sensibilities" (5: 177). Perhaps Rose Muniment expresses Hyacinth's own ambivalent feelings toward the classes when she says, "I haven't the least objection to seeing the people improved, but I don't want to see the

aristocracy lowered an inch. I like so much to look at it up there" (117). Later in the novel, authorial commentary tells us about Hyacinth's concern with identity, "a constant element in his moral life, that needs to be remembered in any view of him at a given time" (480):

> There was no peace for him between the two currents that flowed in his nature, the blood of his passionate plebeian mother and that of his long-descended supercivilised sire. . . . It was comparatively easy for him to accept himself as the son of a terribly light Frenchwoman; there seemed a deeper obloquy even than that in his having for his other parent a nobleman altogether wanting in nobleness. . . . Sometimes, in imagination, he sacrificed one of the authors of his being to the other, throwing over Lord Frederick much the oftener; sometimes, when the theory failed that his father would have done great things for him if he had lived, or the assumption broke down that he had been Florentine Vivier's only lover, he cursed and disowned them alike . . . Of course, his worst moments now, as they had always been the worst, were those

> in which his grounds for holding that Lord Frederick had really been his father viciously fell away from him. (6: 264-66)

Mr. Vetch's early assessement of him as "a thin-skinned, morbid, mooning, introspective little beggar, with a good deal of imagination and not much perseverance, who'll expect a good deal more of life than he'll find in it" (5: 32) proves prophetic. Predicting that Hyacinth will not be happy, he goes on to concede that "the youngster's interesting; one sees he has a mind and even a soul, and in that respect he's . . . peculiar" (5: 32). A sense of shame and of superiority instilled in him by his foster mother must contribute to the irreconcilable tensions Hyacinth experiences about his identity. "She had sown in her boy's mind the seeds of shame and rancour; she had made him conscious of his stigma, of his exquisitely vulnerable spot, and condemned him to know that for him the sun would never shine as it shone for most others" (5: 69-70). She also instills in him a sense of superiority because of his alleged, though illegitimate, nobility. Her concern that he would marry "beneath his station" prompts him to conclude, "he would never marry at all. . . . he would never hand on to another the burden that had made his own young spirit so intolerably sore, the inheritance that had darkened the

whole threshold of his manhood" (5: 80). Later, to allay Pinnie's fears that he might marry somebody beneath him, he asks: "Do you think I'd marry anyone who would marry me? . . . The kind of girl who'd look at me is the kind of girl I'd never look at" (5: 157). He thus expresses his upwardly mobile ambitions. Also,

> By the nature of his mind he was perpetually, almost morbidly conscious that the circle in which he lived was an infinitesimally small shallow eddy in the roaring vortex of London, and his imagination plunged again and again into the flood that whirled past it and round it, in the hope of being carried to some brighter, happier vision--the vision of societies where, in splendid rooms, with smiles and soft voices, distinguished men, with women who were both proud and gentle, talked of art, literature and history. (5: 140-41)

During periods of depression, when "the sense of exclusion from all he would have liked most to enjoy in life settled on him like a pall" (5: 168), he feels all of London mocking him. A youth on whom "nothing was lost" (5: 169) with his great capacity for learning, he feels equal to doing full justice to any privilege or luxury life could offer. "It was not so much that he wanted to

enjoy as that he wanted to know; his desire wasn't to be pampered but to be initiated" (5: 169). Fenced off from social recognition, "his personal discomfort was the result of an intense admiration for what he had missed" (5: 170)

Hyacinth's search for identity involves him in concerns with biological origins and in concerns with national origins. When the Poupins try to find out his national identity and suggest that perhaps he is French, "he did n't really know if he were French or were English, or which of the two he should prefer to be" (5: 112). His response to the Poupins' suggestion, "Oh, I dare say I ain't anything" (5: 113), expresses his sense of alienation. Though he would like to go through life in his own character, Hyacinth feels compelled to cover up his character as carefully as possible and go through life "in a mask, in a borrowed mantle," "every day and every hour an actor" (5: 86).

Hyacinth himself and his many parents are determined that he should rise above his station. Pinnie has ambitions for Hyacinth. She is determined that "he should never go into a small shop" (5: 99). She knows that Hyacinth considers bookbinding "quite one of the fine arts" (5: 67). To Hyacinth, "the art of the binder's is an exquisite art" (5: 89). Still, he looks

at bookbinding as an interim occupation, and he expresses his frustration to Millicent; he would not be a bookbinder any longer than he has to be. He also confides in her that "he wrote--quite as for publication; he was haunted with the dream of literary distinction" (5: 91). Having been exposed to the finer things in life at Medley and in Europe, he determines to change his status in life. Though proud of his craftsmanship, he plans to apply his talents to the inside of books and not confine them to the outside: "That was to be his transition--into literature: to bind the book, charming as the process might be, was after all much less fundamental than to write it. It had occurred to Hyacinth more than once that it would be a fine thing to produce a rare death-song" (6: 156). While he has not determined exactly what he will write, he knows what he will not write--"a fresh deal of the social pack" (6: 156). Pinnie's gentleman, Mr. Vetch, who talks with him more and more as he grows older, knows this, encourages Hyacinth in his reading, and lends him every volume he possesses or can pick up for the purpose.

Hyacinth's gentlemanly appearance enhances the facility with which he moves in upperclass society and thus supports his aspirations. Paul Muniment tells him once, "you ought to be an ornament to society, like a

young man in an illustrated story-book" (5: 235). Later on, he tells Hyacinth that he has always considered him "a duke in disguise" (6: 217). Still later, Christina describes him to Mr. Vetch as "a bloated little aristocrat" (6: 242). At Medley his gentlemanly appearance permits him to pass for a member of the nobility in the presence of Lady Marchant and her daughters. As long as the Princess does not reveal his shameful origins and social identity, Hyacinth decides not to unmask himself. The journey to Medley, just like the later journey through Europe, serves to heighten his conflict and his innate longing for the upper classes. When Hyacinth returns to his bookbinding job after his grand tour, despite the shadow of the "vow" hanging over him, he has made up his mind that "the world's an awfully jolly place" (6: 154). At work he now feels alienated from his co-workers. When Poupin reminds him of his commitment to the cause and goes into a tirade against the aristocracy, Hyacinth turns back to his work with a feeling of sickness: "Everywhere, everywhere he saw the ulcer of envy--the greed of a party hanging together only that it might despoil another to its advantage" (6: 158). In a conversation with Paul, Hyacinth admits that the word "equality" does not say to him as much as it used to, and "inequality" does not shock him as it used to.

Paul sarcastically attributes the change to France and comments: "Your point of view's changed. You've risen in the world." With good-natured ribbing, he goes on to comment that Hyacinth was always "a bloated little swell." All this only tends to intensify Hyacinth's concept of his identity: "the bastard of a murderess, spawned in a gutter out of which he had been picked by a poor sewing-girl" (6: 216). Though conscious of this disparity between appearance and reality within himself, Hyacinth is slow in recognizing the difference between the professed and actual feelings in people close to him. His disillusionment with Paul, Millicent and the Princess completes his apprenticeship to life and prompts him to kill himself. Authorial commentary lets us know that Paul does not reciprocate Hyacinth's affection and therefore will cause disillusionment. In Chapter 36, when they walk hand in hand after he confides his true feelings to Paul and feels that he has reconciled himself to the cause, Hyacinth feels that "friendship was a purer feeling than love and that there was an immense deal of affection between them." Commentary following this underscores the irony: "He didn't even observe at that moment that it was preponderantly on his own side" (400). His seeing Millicent Henning in intimate company with Sholto causes another disillusionment. The greatest

disillisionment comes with his observation of Paul Muniment, at once his friend, brother, mentor and ideal in the revolutionary cause, in intimate company with the Princess Casamassima. Feeling torn between conflicting loyalties to the cause and to the upper class, he experiences betrayal in the new alliances between Millicent and Sholto, between Paul and the Princess. Unable to reconcile such powerful feelings, he puts a violent end to himself.

From all outward appearances, persons close to Hyacinth are all equally unaware of the tumult he experiences that leads to his suicide. Frequent narrative commentary lets the reader become aware of Hyacinth's unrest. His suicide thus must be the result of his internalized quest. Philip Page in "The Princess Casamassima: Suicide and 'The Penetrating Imagination'" attempts to glorify Hyacinth's suicide by labeling it "the final projection, the final imaginative leap" and "an act of creative imagination, a positive assertion against the darkness" (168); however, fully lacking in any redemptive value, Hyacinth's suicide remains the ultimate act of negation committed by an unsuccessful quester. Yet what Page asserts about Hyacinth Robinson's suicide may be applied with equal validity to the other Jamesian suicides without any redeeming value; "the

suicide embodies the final development of James's structure, the final attempt to penetrate the unknown" (167).

The self-willed deaths in "The Modern Warning," "The Pupil" and "The Patagonia" parallel those in Roderick Hudson and The Princess Casamassima in the absence of any redeeming effects of the suicides. Agatha in "The Modern Warning" seeks to reconcile the opposing pulls of America and Europe symbolized in her opposing loyalties to her brother and her husband. As in the case of Hyacinth Robinson, observers are unaware of internal tumult. While in the case of Hyacinth Robinson narrative commentary makes the reader at least partially aware of internal tensions, in the case of Agatha even the reader is thoroughly unaware of suicidal tendencies. The Richard Cory-like unexpectedness of the suicide can only be explained in terms of an internalized quest. The violent twist that James gives to his favorite theme (international) in this story can be partially explained in terms of the autobiographical element Edel suggests: "The Modern Warning" "reflects the novelist's increasing sense that the lands of his birth and of his adoption are 'simply different chapters of the same general subject' and his writings of this time suggest the futility of an endless parade of transatlantic differences" (CT 7: 9).

A detailed examination of Agatha's conflicting loyalties to her brother and her husband would further illuminate the conflict she experiences in seeking to reconcile the tension. Narrative commentary in the opening paragraph of the story makes clear the deep-rooted family loyalty among the Grices, Agatha, her brother Macarthy and her mother: "Family feeling was strong among these three though Macarthy's manner of showing it was sometimes peculiar" (15). Macarthy's national prejudice is so great that "it cost him a certain effort to admit that a little Italian lake could be deep enough to drown a pair of independent Americans or that Italian horses could have the high spirit to run away with them" (17). From their first encounter, he makes no secret of his disapproval of his sister's association with Sir Rufus Chasemore. He repeatedly makes his resentment clear to his mother. His prejudice and antagonism come out in statements like "I want my sister to marry one of her own people" (28). When asked about the possibility of the Agatha/Rufus marriage, he responds, "She may do it without my consent; she shall never do it with" (27). Narrative commentary fills us in on Macarthy's feelings toward his sister and her marrying an Englishman:

> He was so fond of his sister that he had a secret hope that she would never marry at all.

> . . . the essence of his thought was that on the day Agatha should marry she would throw him over--On the day she would marry an Englishman she would not throw him over--she would betray him. That is she would betray her country, and it came to the same thing. Macarthy's patriotism was of so intense a hue that to his own sense the national life and his own life flowed in an indistinguishable current. (32)

When Agatha makes up her mind to marry Sir Rufus, her brother "regarded her marriage as an abjuration, an apostasy, a kind of moral treachery" (49). Again, the narrator reveals Macarthy's thoughts:

> The pity of Agatha's desertion was that she had been meant for better things, she had appreciated her birthright, or if she had not it had not been the fault of a brother who had taken so much pains to form her mind and character. The sentiment of her nationality had been cultivated in her; it was not a mere brute instinct or customary prejudice--it was a responsibility, a faith, a religion. She was not a poor specimen but a remarkably fine one; she was intelligent, she was clever, she was sensitive, she could understand difficult

> things and feel great ones (50).

Though Macarthy never tells Agatha directly "what he said to her mother at Cadenabbia" (the narrator emphasizes this through repetition) he manages to fill her with guilt by impressing upon her that the marriage would be a strenuous one because "in so many ways her good would be his evil, her white his black and vice versa"--the fact in a word that by birth, tradition, convictions, she was the product of a democratic society, while the very breath of Sir Rufus's nostrils was the denial of human equality (50).

Sir Rufus's feelings toward Americans reciprocate those of Macarthy's toward Englishmen: "he had let her know at an early stage of their acquaintance that he had never liked Americans in the least as people" (37-38). Narrative commentary following this lets the reader know that, flattered by his regard for her, she hoped to convert him to "a friendlier view." But her brother's warning puts a damper on such enthusiasm:

> If she were not careful she would give her country away: . . . She had a lurid vision in which the chance seemed to be greater that Sir Rufus Chasemore would bring her over to his side than that she should make him like anything he had begun by disliking; so that she

> resisted, with the conviction that the complications which might arise from allowing a prejudiced Englishman to possess himself, as he evidently desired to do, of her affections, would be much greater than a sensitive girl with other loyalties to observe might be able to manage (38).

When Rufus makes a proposal of marriage surpassing national prejudices, the torn Agatha replies: "I don't think I shall ever marry. I have other duties. I can't do what I like with my life" (42). Sir Rufus appropriately sums up Agatha'a attitude when he says, "One tells a girl one adores her and she replies that she doesn't care so long as one doesn't adore her compatriots" (44).

Despite all this, Agatha after her marriage is able not only to reconcile herself to her new home, society and country, but even to relish to some extent her husband's rise in status. In contrast to Macarthy, who considers her marriage an act of betraying her country, she herself considers it a patriotic act: "She had married him partly to bring him over to an admiration of her country." On her visit to America as Lady Chasemore in the company of her husband, it evidently pleases her brother to see that "she enjoyed her native air and her

temporary reunion with some of her old familiars. This was a graceful inconsistency on his part: it showed that he had not completely given her up. Perhaps he thought Sir Rufus would die and that in this case she would come back and live in New York" (57). When she does not accompany her husband on his tour of the rest of the U. S., "The idea of giving up something for Macarthy (she only wished it had been something more) did her great good--sweetened the period of her husband's absence" (60). When Agatha learns that her husband plans to write a book about America, she reports it to her brother, "to prove, both to herself and Macarthy, that she had a good conscience" (64). Her patriotism surfaces violently when she reads her husband's book about America and she defends her country to him.

When she learns of her brother's impending visit to England, an act of reconciliation on his part, Agatha suddenly decides she wants her husband to publish the book she had persuaded him to withhold. However, when Macarthy's visit becomes imminent, she kills herself as the ultimate testimony of her loyalty to her brother.

As in the case of Agatha, Grace Mavis on board The Patagonia also experiences a neatly polarized conflict. En route to be united with her fiance in Europe, she finds herself trapped between her commitment to her

fiancé, who awaits her in Europe, and her feelings for a co-passenger who trifles with her affections. When the rumor mill starts going, like Daisy Miller, young Grace Mavis aboard the Patagonia kills herself. The unexpectedness of the suicide here again points to the power of the internal tensions.

Another sensitive young person wills his own death in "The Pupil," a story Edel calls one of James's "potboilers" (CT 7: 11). Young Morgan Moreen, who seeks sustenance through love, fails to find it in his parents and looks to his tutor for his emotional needs. When he experiences rejection at the hands of the tutor also, his quest ends in despair and he releases his already precarious hold on life.

In contrast to the self-willed deaths in Roderick Hudson, The Princess Casamassima, "The Modern Warning," "The Patagonia," and "The Pupil," those in another group of James's works produce certain positive effects in survivors, illustrating what Hugh Holman calls "the Bildungsroman, American style" (168), in which the initiation results from witnessing the action, not from taking it. To great American classics in this category like Moby Dick and "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Holman adds "Madame de Mauves" and "Daisy Miller" and aptly sums up their action:

> In each of these short novels the viewpoint character, an American living in Europe, meets an American woman who personifies the innocence and the freedom of the American people, watches a series of events in which this American woman is the central figure and to which the witness has only incidental and peripheral relationships, falls in love, in some fashion, with the American woman, and sees the basic situation in which the woman is involved end tragically, in both cases with someone's death. Out of witnessing these experiences the observers come to understand themselves and the meaning of American innocence and moral passion much more clearly than they had at the beginning . . . . both Longmore, in "Madame de Mauves," and Frederick Winterbourne, in "Daisy Miller," are passive characters to whom nothing really happens in the action of the story." (177-78)

Daisy herself, though traveling in Europe, is different from most Jamesian protagonists abroad because of the absence of an identifiable quest. At best her parents must have had in mind the possibility of a good marriage for her when they sent her to Europe. Apart

from the possibility of finding a husband, the journey improved her chances of finding a better alliance as a result of the cultural benefits of European exposure. Since Daisy does not change in the course of the story and her observer, Winterbourne, does change significantly toward the end of the story, it may well be considered the story of his initiation. When Winterbourne learns to admire Daisy Miller, it is too late. After having caused Daisy to lose her will to live, when the recognition of her true worth sinks into him, his response and action express the self-knowledge he has gained as a result of his having observed Daisy. He confesses, "I have lived too long in foreign parts" and returns to Geneva, the city of his education and his expatriate home.

In contrast to Winterbourne, who failed to admire Daisy when he first encountered her, and continued to be critical of her until her death, Longmore admires Euphemia from the very beginning. His admiration for her grows steadily until he realizes that what he admired in her virtue was probably a coldness. When he realizes that Madame de Mauves does not return his love, he returns to his native America, still admiring her. Two years later, he learns from the visiting Mrs. Draper of Euphemia's husband's suicide. Mrs. Draper's estimate of Euphemia-- "She was stone, she was ice, she was outraged

virtue" (3: 209)--makes a strong impression on Longmore. The concluding paragraph of the story reveals the change that has taken place in Longmore as a result of his having observed Euphemia:

> Longmore was strongly moved, and his first impulse after he had recovered his composure was to return immediately to Europe. But several years have passed, and he still lingers at home. The truth is that, in the midst of all the ardent tenderness of his memory of Madame de Mauves, he has become conscious of a singular feeling--a feeling of wonder, of uncertainty, of awe. (13: 331)

To Holman's list we may add "Osborne's Revenge," "A Round of Visits" and The Wings of the Dove as works dealing with suicide in which observers gain from having observed the suicides. Generally in these works we may identify dual quests--those of the protagonist and of the observer. The protagonist is on an identifiable quest that either fails and culminates in suicide or unwittingly causes the suicide of a minor character, as in the case of Madame de Mauves. An unconscious or involuntary seeker gains significant knowledge from observing the self-willed death. The Bildungsroman, thus, is effected in the observer. In "Osborne's

Revenge" the vengeance-bent protagonist himself is the observer. Philip Osborne, perturbed by his friend Robert Graham's suicide, vows to avenge his death by getting even with Henrietta Congreve, the young woman who, according to Graham, toyed with his affections. Careful detective work on Osborne's part proves to him that Miss Congreve is innocent of any wrongdoing. In the beginning, Philip Osborne tries to fight a favorable impression of Miss Congreve; however, soon, his attitude changes, and toward the end of his investigations, he marries Miss Congreve. Three weeks after his initial encounter with Miss Congreve, "Philip's humor had undergone a great change" (CT 2: 44). Having observed her positive qualities, and still obsessed with the idea of revenge, he is "sadly, wofully puzzled by the idea that a woman could unite so much loveliness with so much treachery, so much light with so much darkness" (45). Later on, he needs to reassure himself that "he had not been wholly cheated of his revenge. He had begun by hating her and he hated her still" (53). He learns from Major Dodd that "the man [Robert Graham] was as mad as a March hare" and "a monomaniac" (58) and that if Miss Congreve was the cause of his suicide, she was "the innocent cause"; since she was already engaged to another man, she could not have trifled with Robert (59). At

the close of the narration he learns also that "she thinks he [Graham] died in his bed" (60). The shock of the recognition of her complete innocence in his friend's suicide has him wishing that she never learns the truth. Far from wreaking vengeance on Miss Congreve, Philip Osborne ends up marrying her. The investigation of his best friend's suicide that led to a close observation of the alleged cause of his suicide gives him a new understanding and also a new lease on life; he does indeed gain from Robert Graham's suicide.

Milly Theale's self-willed death and her selflessness in The Wings of the Dove have a reforming effect on Merton Densher, who, under his fiancé's influence, had set out to exploit her. Though Milly's own quest ends in the loss of her life, as in the case of Daisy Miller, the observation of her life and death result in the maturing of Merton Densher. Like Euphemia Cleve, Milly is the obvious quester in Europe. She goes to Europe, not in search of culture, but in search of a cure, hoping that a change of scenery will be beneficial for her physical health. Though she does not evidence a natural interest in art and she purposely avoids museums during much of her travels, an aesthetic atmosphere clearly influences her learning process. As Fogel points out, many of the crucial "scenes of delayed recognition

come about during moments of aesthetic contemplation," intensifying the reader's response to the revelation (31). For example, at the National Gallery where she finds escape and refuge, she also discovers that Densher and Kate know each other. In the course of the novel, gradually she gains much self-knowledge that finally induces her to lose her will to live. Dorothea Krook clearly identifies the stages in Milly's gradual learning. First of all, she learns the extent of her illness. According to Krook, the tragic implications of the range and depth of Milly Theale's self-knowledge surface when she learns from Sir Luke how sick she is. Though she comes to Europe because of her illness, her reaction to the eminent English physician's implications shows that she gains new knowledge. Secondly, her understanding of Kate prevents her from confiding her health condition to Kate. She takes Kate Croy into partial confidence when she asks her to accompany her to the doctor's. But Kate's apparent impatience in the response, "What in the world is the matter with you?" (19: 227), checks her confidence and helps her gain in understanding of Kate. Kate's callous inquisitiveness implied in the question "Well, what?" when she meets Milly after her second visit to the doctor confirms Milly's decision not to confide in Kate. Her evasive

little white lie, "Oh it's all right. He's lovely" (19: 257-58), speaks for itself. Finally, when she learns of the plot against her through Lord Mark, she also releases, like Morgan Moreen, her precarious hold on life.

Merton Densher, though not a Jamesian observer like Longmore, gains substantial knowledge from his close observation of Milly. An unconscious seeker like Longmore and Winterbourne, he changes drastically toward the end of the novel. The novel, then, may be viewed as his Bildungsroman, dealing with Merton Densher's unwilling participation in Kate's plot against Milly and his eventual tragic recognition. As Fogel points out, "He moves, in Blakean terms, from innocence to organized innocence, and his journey follows the Romantic paradigm of spiral return" (57). An examination of the course of Densher's development illustrates this. Prior to his reacquaintance with Milly in London, Merton had visited the "isolated, unmothered, unguarded" (19: 137) Milly three or four times in her New York abode. When he encounters her in London, she is to him a pleasing specimen of a certain American type. The journalist in Densher sees Milly as his "little New York friend" who impresses him as beautiful, though not easy to know (20: 41), and about whom he has corresponded with his

fiancée. Even though he has much liked the person, she is but one of "too many little Miss Theales" (20:10) who form "one of the groups of social phenomena that fell into the scheme of his public letters" (20: 10). His apparently clinical view of Milly undergoes drastic changes after their London encounter. Milly's worst fear at the time of the reacquaintance is that the promising young man who is being "kind" to her will soon fall in line with the rest of her acquaintances in London and that his "view" of her would merge with the view--the way her other acquaintances see her--with a mixture of pity, admiration and wonder. As the later events of the novel illustrate, Densher's view of Milly goes beyond merging with the view of her other London acquaintances. Under Kate's influence, his view merges with Kate's view and he submissively cooperates in her attempt to defraud Milly. During his meditation on the bench in Regent's Park after his first meeting with Kate and Milly, he is bewildered by the prominent position Milly occupies in his and Kate's affairs; however, he manages to rationalize Milly's importance to Kate as a possible interest on his fiancée's part to use her to arrange for their secret meetings (20: 14-15). Ironically, when he falls deeper and deeper into Kate's schemes, Milly rises higher in his estimation. Finally, when Milly's discovery of his

complicity in the plot against her makes her lose her will to live and she dies after willing her wealth to him, Merton sees her for what she really is. By offering Kate the ultimatum to choose between him and Milly's wealth, he shows that he has returned to being his original, true self. Milly's death certainly has not been in vain. Merton Densher gains immensely from watching it.

In the last story he published, "A Round of Visits," James narrates the story of an individual seeking comfort from others through the unburdening of an unspecified problem; ironically, he becomes the depository of other people's concerns. While it is likely, as Edel holds, that the story might be suggestive of the burden James himself carried (2: 90), James's notebook entries spread over sixteen years show that his concerns in the story far exceeded autobiographical limitations. A notebook entry of April 21, 1894, records the original idea of

> the young man with something on his mind--the young man with a secret, a worry, a misery, a burden, an oppression, that he carries about with him and suffers from the incapacity to tell--from the want of a confidant, a listening ear and answering heart, an intelligent

receptacle for. He tries to communicate it, in the belief that it will relieve him. He goes from house to house and from person to person, but finds everywhere an indifference, a preoccupation too visible, a preoccupation, on the part of every one, with other things, with their own affairs, troubles, joys, pleasures, interests--an atmosphere that checks, chills, paralyses the possibility of any appeal. . . . So he wanders, so he goes--with his burden only growing heavier--looking vainly for the ideal sympathy, the waiting, expectant, responsive recipient. My little idea has been that he doesn't find it; but that he encounters instead a sudden appeal, an appeal more violent, as it were, more pitiful even than his own has had it in it to be. He meets in a word a demand where he had at last been looking for a supply--a demand which embodies the revelation of a trouble which he immediately feels to be greater than his own. In the presence of this communication which he has to receive instead of giving it he forgets his own, ceases to need to make a requisition for it. His own ache, in a word, passes from him in his pity and his

> sympathy; he is healed by doing himself what he wanted to have done for him. (158)

As the editors of the notebooks comment, "James treated, in 'A Round of Visits,' the theme of unexpected release from pain through pity for the greater suffering of someone else" (160). A notebook entry of February 16, 1899, indicates James's continuing preoccupation with the idea:

> the poor young man with the burden of his personal sorrow or secret on his mind that he longs to work off on some one, roams restlessly, nervously, in depression, about London, trying for a recipient, and finding in the great heartless preoccupied city and society, every one taken up with quite other matters than the occasion for listening to him. I had thought, for the point of this, of his being suddenly approached by some one who demands his attention for some dreadful complication or trouble--a trouble so much greater than his own, a distress so extreme, that he sees the moral: the balm for his woe residing not in the sympathy of some one else, but in the coercion of giving it--the sympathy--to some one else. (281)

The theme gets fully matured only a decade later; he changes the locale to New York. According to the editors of the notebooks, "He increased Mark Monteith's sense of his own burden by plunging him into the peculiar loneliness of the modern metropolis, to which he has just come back after a long absence abroad" (281). Mark Monteith, summoned to New York from abroad with news of loss, feels a loss, a pain, which he wants to share with someone: "there was something of his heart's heaviness he wanted so to give out" (12: 4299). In the dehumanized city, seeking to find a sympathetic listener, Mark Monteith literally goes on a quest; leaving his tropical jungle-like hotel, he ventures into the cold New York winter. His round of visits begins with his calls on Mrs. Folliott and Mrs. Ash and ends with his visit with Newton Winch. Though he expects to find someone who would lend a sympathetic ear to his troubles, he ends up being the confidant of those in whom he expected to confide. Ironically, he finds a listener in one who has himself done what Phil Bloodgood (the man who had victimized him) had done. Newton Winch confesses that he is "such another" (12: 457) as Bloodgood. Mark Monteith's reaction to the knowledge marks the beginning of his education and consequent change:

> He inexpressibly understood, and nothing in

> life had ever been so strange and dreadful to him as his thus helping himself by a longer and straighter stretch, as it were, to the monstrous sense of his friend's 'education.' It had been in its immeasurable action, the education of business, of which the fruits were all around them. Yet prodigious was the interest, for prodigious truly--it seemed to loom before Mark--must have been the system. (12: 457-58)

Having become Newton's confidant and the witness to his suicide, Mark Monteith cannot help feeling guilty. In response to the policeman's question, "Don't you think, Sir, you might have prevented it?" his answer, "I really think I must practically have caused it" (12: 459) expresses his guilt in the unhappy affair. No doubt, Mark Monteith has been educated.

According to Holman, one possible explanation for the frequency of the Bildungsroman of the witness character is that "this form reflects the unconscious conflict in a group of American writers between the essentially optimistic demands of the novel of development and a sense of the tragic quality of life. If the protagonist is to learn a mature response to life, he must face the darkness, pain, and injustice that are

large elements of living, and he must survive it with the possibility of actually achieving his lowered 'conceit of attainable felicity.' According to Holman, in novels laid in the complex social structures of Europe and England, this learning process could and often did take place without violence. He distinguishes the simpler, cruder and more violent world of America, where such darkness and evil were likely to find their expression through extreme violence and death or physically and spiritually destructive actions, from the world of Europe. While it is true that the witness characters themselves do not experience violence or death, violence and death permeate James's suicide fiction, even in works set in Europe. As Holman elaborates, "In each of these Bildungsromane the witness character is forced to see, through what happens to others, the 'power of blackness' in his world. And in all these cases he takes an essentially American attitude toward it, an attitude of pragmatic acceptance. Having seen examples of mines in the field of life, he does not--like most of the protagonists in the central plots of these novels--push on with blind or ideal courage. Instead, he tries to come to terms with this newly recognized reality and, in typical American fashion, to find a way to 'make do'" (193-94).

The wilfully courted deaths (one literal and another figurative) in The American defy classification into any of the types of suicides with which I have so far dealt in this chapter. Christopher Newman, variously described by the narrator in the first chapter as "a shrewd and capable fellow" (2: 2), "a powerful specimen of America," "by inclination a temperate man," and "evidently a practical man," sets out on his European journey with a clearly defined quest. In the second chapter, we learn from the protagonist himself that he has made his "everlasting fortune" and that after having been his own master all his life (all thirty-six years of it) he is ready to surrender his freedom to family life. Since he fails to achieve his clearly defined goals and his aborted quest leads to two self-willed deaths, Christopher Newman may be considered one of the most frustrated of James's seekers. He has made enough money to "rest awhile, to forget the confounded thing, to look about [me], to see the world, to have a good time, to improve [my] mind, and, if the fancy takes me, to marry a wife" (2: 24). After a moral transformation experienced in an American taxi in New York (2: 30), Newman, "a good worker" who has come abroad to amuse himself but does not "very well know how" (2: 28), seems to "feel a new man" who "long[s] for a new world" (2: 32). This brings him

to Europe. Having made money, he now goes after culture and entertainment with the same kind of gusto; he dedicates one year, during which he is not to receive any business letters, for that purpose and declares that he wants the best:

> I know best can't be had for mere money, but I rather think money will do a good deal. In addition, I am willing to take a good deal of trouble. . . . I want the biggest kind of entertainment a man can get. People, places, art, nature, everything! I want to see the tallest mountains, and the bluest lakes and the finest pictures, and the handsomest churches, and the most celebrated men, and the most beautiful women. (2: 33)

He later declares to Mrs. Tristram,

> I mean to have a good time. . . . I find I take notice as I go, and I guess I shan't have missed much by the time I have done. I feel something under my ribs here . . . that I can't explain--a sort of strong yearning, a desire to stretch out and haul in. (2: 45)

Mrs. Tristram appropriately interprets Newman's declaration when she responds: "You are the great Western Barbarian, stepping forth in his innocence and

might, gazing a while at this poor corrupt Old World and then swooping down on it" (2: 45). Soon Newman reveals his expectations of marriage, for all practical purposes the acquisition of a wife: "My wife must be a pure pearl" (2: 48). He elaborates on it by adding,

> I want a great woman. . . . That's one thing I <u>can</u> treat myself to, and if it is to be had I mean to have it. . . . I've succeeded, and now what am I to do with my success? To make it perfect, as I see it, there must be a lovely being perched on the pile like some shining statue crowning some high monument. She must be as good as she's beautiful, and as clever as she's good. I can give my wife many things, so I'm not afraid to ask certain others myself. She shall have everything a woman can desire; I shall not even object to her being too good for me; she may be cleverer and wiser than I can understand, and I shall only be the better pleased. I want, in a word, the best article in the market. (2: 49)

Ironically, the plebeian American Newman's well-defined quest fails in one of its major goals, that of acquiring a wife; also, it results in two aristocratic Europeans, a brother and a sister he had come to love and

value, courting death in their individual fashions. Virginia Fowler draws attention to the similarity between Claire and Valentin, to Christopher Newman's attempt at moulding them to his American notions and to his ultimately destructive effects on both. Interestingly, Claire de Cintré and her brother Valentin de Bellegarde reject life in the outside world at about the same time. Valentin wilfully courts death in a duel at about the same time that his sister submits to her family's persuasion and decides to enter a Carmelite convent rather than marry Newman. Valentin's comparison of himself and his sister to Orestes and Electra intensifies mythical associations. From his first encounter with her, Christopher Newman has decided she is to be his wife. As Fowler points out (56-57), Valentin's deathbed banter with Newman, who tries to convince him that he can live if he wills it, underscores the impossibility of his conforming to Newman's world and his rejection of life itself by provoking a duel over a woman clearly unworthy of him. While Valentin wills his death through violent means, his sister, who retains physical life, wilfully rejects life in the outside world by becoming a nun. That Claire views her entering a convent as a suicidal act has been shown in the first chapter of this dissertation. While Newman himself returns to America

essentially unchanged and his quest mostly unfulfilled, his brief sojourn in Europe results in the rejection of life by two aristocratic natives.

Many of James's characters are seekers who go on literal and/or figurative journeys. The unsuccessful quests of some of his self-destructive seekers are utterly without redeeming effects, especially when the self-destructive act is performed by protagonists like Roderick Hudson and Hyacinth Robinson. Others, when they will their own deaths, either through violent means or through passive means, produce salutary effects in survivors. Ironically, from their failures, phoenix-like rise the survivors, suddenly matured and ready for new beginnings. The quest, in bringing together the other elements of the Jamesian suicide myth--autobiography, the international theme and the journey--clearly is the most important element of James's suicide fiction.

In spite of the efforts of sociologists and psychologists to account for and prevent self-destruction, suicide continues to be an inexplicable, baffling act, a negative assertion of the will. While outside causes tend to intensify the provocation for self-destruction, the act in itself may be understood only in psychological terms. Since self-destruction can be accomplished either by an active, violent exertion of the will or by a more

passive losing of the will, deaths resulting from either may be regarded as suicidal.

Historically, the Romantic period witnessed a popularization and even a glorification of the act of killing oneself. Henry James, writing in a period following a period of such apotheosis of suicide, combines Romanticism and Realism in his fiction. With the emphasis on the mental processes of his characters and on psychological action as opposed to physical, he portrays suicide in all its complexity. That his fictional suicides can be neatly placed into categories identified by eminent sociologists and psychologists and that even the statistical composition of his suicidal characters follows the established pattern of the times demonstrate his realistic understanding of the baffling phenomenon.

James, having grown up in a family of strong-willed, individualistic people, had occasion to watch the power of will in operation. The suicides of several of his friends and acquaintances and the contemplated suicides of members of his immediate family must have attracted him to the exploration of the suicidal consciousness. However, except in the case of a contemplated suicide--that of Spencer Brydon of "The Jolly Corner"--James does not provide us with firsthand accounting of the mental

processes of the suicide. In doing so, he leaves intact, and in essence realistic, the mystery, the magic and the inexplicability of the ultimate act of negation.

In the final analysis, James's suicide fiction, a relatively small part of his total work, also incorporates characteristic elements of his private mythology--his life, the main wellspring of his inspiration, the tension between transatlantic cultures that affects his displaced characters and the quest for the self. A journey, either physical or mental, an integral part of the quest, infuses James's private myth, and failed quests lead to self-destruction in several of his characters. In the formulation of his private myth, James belongs with well-recognized myth-makers like Joyce, Eliot and Faulkner.

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Appendix

Tales and Novels of Obvious or Suspected Physical Suicides

1)	"Osborne's Revenge"	1868
2)	Watch and Ward	1871
3)	"Madame de Mauves"	1874
4)	Roderick Hudson	1874-75
5)	The Princess Casamassima	1885-86
6)	"The Modern Warning"	1888
7)	"The Patagonia"	1888
8)	"Sir Edmund Orme"	1891
9)	"A Round of Visits"	1910

Deaths That Appear to Be Self-Willed

1)	"The Story of a Year"	1865
2)	"A Most Extraordinary Case"	1868
3)	The American	1876-77
4)	Daisy Miller	1878
5)	"Longstaff's Marriage"	1878
6)	The Pupil	1891
7)	The Wings of the Dove	1902

Vita

Mary John Joseph was born in Kerala, India, on April 4, 1940, to Mr. John Thoppil, a lawyer-journalist cum insurance executive and his wife, Aleyamma. After graduating from Holy Angels' Convent English High School in Trivandrum, India, she received her B. A. in Economics in 1959 from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, and her M. A. in English in 1961 from Maharaja's College, Ernakulam. In 1959 she married Erat S. Joseph and they have two children, Bobby and Bina. In 1965 she followed her husband, who was doing Ph.D. studies in water resources engineering at the University of Colorado, to the United States. Currently on the faculty at Southern University, Baton Rouge, and a candidate for the Ph. D. in English at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, she has previous teaching experience in colleges under the University of Kerala, India, and at Marywood College, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

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